

**ORIGINS, GENEALOGIES,
AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY:
TOWARDS A FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY OF MYTH**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis develops and advocates a feminist philosophy of myth in order to reformulate influential understandings of the roles and functions of myths in recent mythological scholarship. The initial hypothesis which the thesis establishes in Chapter 1 is that the designation of myth *qua* myth is neither innocent nor organic; highly consequential interests are at stake when myths are narrated, and, moreover, the categorisation of some types of narrative as ‘myth’ and others as ‘science’, or ‘philosophy’, for example, indicates powerful assertions about their relative level of validity and authority. I argue that these assertions are implicated in discursive strategies of containment and exclusion and allied to forms of identity construction characterised by an assertion of singularity. They further rely on the location of a non-transcendable point of origin as a means of securing the stability and legitimacy of these constructions. I develop this argument, in Chapters 2–7, through an extended case study of the German search for origins from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, and demonstrate its relationship to the German romantic attempt to construct a noble German identity. I critique these forms of identity and origin construction, arguing that the German case is but one example of the western metaphysical theories of ontology which are indebted to inflected patrilinearity, the main feature of which is a preoccupation with monogenetic singularity. I consequently develop an alternative feminist model of origins and identity in Chapters 8–10 based on poststructural and psychoanalytical feminist theories of maternity as a site of splitting, doubling, and process. I acknowledge that while the identification of origins is an ontological convention, the assertion of patrilineal provenance creates forms of subjectivity that are exclusionary, dialectical, and monolithic, and are, therefore, inadequate frameworks for constructing ethically oriented models of identity in a post-feminist context. In contrast, I suggest that metaphors of maternal origin offer a considerably more promising, if transitional, discursive frame for articulating identities that stress multiplicity, connectedness, immanence, and dialogue.

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This thesis is dedicated with much love and appreciation to the memory of Julia Leslie (23rd January 1948–24th September 2004).

CONVENTIONS AND ORTHOGRAPHY

List of Abbreviations

BCE	Before the Common Era
<i>c.</i>	<i>circa</i>
CE	Common Era
<i>DM</i>	<i>Deutsche Mythologie</i> (Jakob Grimm)
<i>fl.</i>	<i>floruit</i>
<i>KHM</i>	<i>Kinder- und Hausmärchen</i> (Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm)
n.d.	no date
<i>NL</i>	<i>Nibelungenlieder</i>
n.p.	no publisher
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>Or.Eu.</i>	<i>Oresteia: Eumenides</i> (Aeschylus)
<i>Sue.</i>	<i>De Vita Caesarum</i> (Caius Suetonius Tranquillus)
<i>Tac. Ann.</i>	<i>Annales</i> (Tacitus)
<i>Tac. Ger.</i>	<i>Germania</i> (Tacitus)
<i>Th.</i>	<i>Theogony</i> (Hesiod)
<i>Vell. Pat.</i>	<i>Res Gestae Divi Augusti</i> (Velleius Paterculus)

Notes on Style

1. Unless indicated otherwise, any emphasis marked in quotations is found in the original. Emphases are indicated in italics.
2. Translations and transcriptions from any non-English sources cited are provided in Appendix I.
3. References from classical sources, i.e., Greek and Latin, are listed in the Bibliography under the author but are cited throughout the thesis according to the standard form of citation for Greek and Latin sources, i.e. *Title Chapter/Book.verse*.
4. The Bibliography includes works cited and all works (uncited) that have been consulted in the process of writing this thesis.

PRETEXT

This is a story. June 26th 1970, Nambour General Hospital, Queensland, Australia. My origin, from the start a divided one. An Australian mother, her parentage divided across class lines. An Irish father, himself a compromise (short-lived) between a Catholic mother and a Protestant father. My parents had met in India as Christian missionaries and it was there that we returned when I was six months old, to a small Muslim village in Kashmir, the product of Partition, where some of the first words I spoke were in Urdu. At the age of six I went to an English boarding school in the south of India. It was an utterly foreign place and I lost my mother tongue, learning to speak in the clipped precision of a fading colonial elite and, bewilderingly, to disdain and to separate myself from the only people to whom I had ever felt I belonged. My mother tongue returns to me sometimes in dreams, always in fragments, fleeting. It is the only time I feel completely at home. *'Yes, I only have one language, yet it is not mine'*—a refrain that repeatedly echoes throughout Jacques Derrida's *Monolingualism of the Other* (1998), and one that drew me into his work, haunts me, returns me to a memory of myself, and relieves me because it names an experience I still struggle to find the words for. It represents a moment of recognition for me, a way in which to put simply but profoundly the complexity of a childhood spent searching for a place I did not, could not, belong to. *'You see, never will this language be mine. And truth to tell, it never was'* (Derrida 1998:2). Australian? Irish? Indian? British? Neither one nor the other. And this is the crux of what I explore in this thesis. What is it to belong and not to belong? What is it to be an undivided or divided self? How are place and self connected? Do origins secure, unequivocally, the stability and coherency of the self? Or is this always already impossible? Some of these questions have been asked before. They will, of course, be asked again. I do not offer any answers but I do suggest an opening to a way of asking these questions differently. Identity, as this era's compulsion, must speak compulsively of a problem of difference. And it is this 'problem'—of difference as a ground of and challenge to singular and whole identity—that I seek to explore in what follows.

The process of writing this thesis has not been systematic, starting with a clear concept of what I intended to say, to prove, to argue, and then proceeding neatly to map out, unchanged, my initial set of propositions carried through to a convincing

conclusion. Is it a dangerous admission to say that it came to me in bits and pieces that I have struggled to make sense of? That in some ways it remains a collection of fragmented stories, beliefs, desires and that it cannot be otherwise? That it was not until I had almost finished that I realised what had been at stake all along and so I returned to the beginning—my beginning—again and again? What has been at stake, I discover belatedly, has been my own search for identity and origins, conducted under the cover of a study of another search for identity and origins. There is no immediately obvious reason, of course, why my own convoluted mental processes should be of any interest or informative value in the academic context of writing a thesis. However, because this is a thesis about origins and identities, and about the criss-crossing of race, gender, class, nationality, religion, and sexuality that constitute in complex ways the stories that can and may be told of identity, I begin with a small fragment of my own story as a way of placing myself—my own ‘origins’ and my ‘identity’—very deliberately within this text as part of its formative context and content. I have not mastered this text; I do not stand apart from or outside it. Were I not to acknowledge this from the outset, I would leave my account of the ‘self’ to remain uninterrogated while placing others’ accounts of their selves under question...

INTRODUCTION

I. Overview

This thesis develops and advocates a feminist philosophy of myth in order to challenge and reformulate some influential understandings of the roles and functions of myths in recent mythological scholarship. I will establish what I perceive to be a relationship of interdependency between what has become popularly known as the ‘politics of identity’, the legitimating *functions* of myth, and the legitimating *practices* of mythmaking within the particular rhetoric of identity that has preoccupied western metaphysics since the ‘Age of Enlightenment’. As such I will claim that myth and mythmaking are, after Michel Foucault, discursive practices insofar as they create and encode a circumscribed articulation of identity idealisations and aspirations. The initial hypothesis from which I proceed is the idea, suggested by Bruce Lincoln (1999), that the designation of myth *qua* myth is not innocent; highly consequential interests are at stake when myths are narrated, and, moreover, the categorisation of some types of narrative as ‘myth’ against other narrative forms such as ‘history’, or, more significantly ‘philosophy’, for example, indicates forceful assertions about their ‘relative level of validity and authority’ (Lincoln 1999:ix). I will argue that these assertions are implicated in discursive strategies of containment and exclusion that are demonstrably allied to forms of identity construction and maintenance that are characterised by an assertion of the ‘self’ as singular, autonomous, and stable. Further, I will suggest that they rely on the location of a non-transcendable point of origin that is intimately connected to a patrilineal logic of continuity and causality as a means of securing the stability and legitimacy of these constructions.

I test my core hypothesis via an extended case study, which occupies the bulk of my discussion in the thesis. It is a study of what I consider to be a ‘myth of origins’, namely the search for the origins of the German people during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. This search, which was also a search for a stable concept of German identity, was achieved through two types of mythmaking: firstly, vernacular myth and folklore traditions were ‘retrieved’ and then wielded as repositories of the German character, in the process creating a canonical basis for German identity that concealed the fragmented and manufactured nature of the sources used. Nonetheless,

these sources were thought to convey the complete and authentic basis of the German nation as rooted in shared cultural traditions—continuity—giving the nationalist project of the nineteenth century a solid basis for national unification. It further served to enable scholars and public figures to reify the origin of the German people as autochthonous, pure, and noble. The second form of mythmaking took the form of the narration of German identity itself, that is, the production of a coherent and linear narrative of nationhood that sought to ground itself in a glorious past and to express the hope of a future utopian destiny. I will show that these two forms of mythmaking operated as ‘discourses of differentiation’ (Lincoln 1999:54) that served the interests of the German romantic nationalist project of the nineteenth century in establishing a vision of a unified nation-state against a backdrop of unprecedented social and political fragmentation. As such, I will argue that a concept of authentic Germanness was developed along an axis of oppositional and exclusionary differences—between Germany and other European nations, the past and the present, Semites and Aryans, and, paradigmatically, between men as the fathers of the nation and women as passive symbols of the national territory. However, paradoxically, these discourses of differentiation were used to claim and to distil the monogenetic singularity, and thus the prestige and autonomy, of the German people. I will suggest, therefore, that the construction of German identity in this period was thought to be contingent on the identification of a singular point of origin, and it was an origin conceived of in patrilineal terms, insofar as the search for origins and the theories of German identity that emerged from it encoded and relied upon a patrilineal model of descent.

The reason why I focus on the German search for origins, rather than any other, is that it occurred in a context where German identity was anything but certain and secure, unlike many other European nations during the period under consideration. While myth was turned to as a source of secure identity and as an origin of innate character, it was only necessary because of that identity’s very uncertainty. As such, the history of the politics of German identity in the period in question provides an informative case study of how what is in fact an unstable identity can be covered over by means of the narration of stability. My aim in focusing on this case study is thus to derive a broader set of principles that can be used to understand ‘myths of origin’ more generally as discursive practices (rather than descriptive narratives) that are rooted in the appropriation of procreative metaphors that encode a patriline as they seek to manufacture and valorise identity as stable, primary, and singular.

I will critique these forms of identity and origin construction, suggesting that, like the German search for origins and identity, they too are indebted to models of inflected patrilinearity, the main feature of which is a preoccupation with monogenetic singularity. While I acknowledge that the identification of origins does perhaps constitute, at the very least, an ontological convention, if not a necessity, the assertion of patrilineal provenance creates forms of subjectivity that are exclusionary, dialectical, and monolithic. I will suggest that these are inadequate and damaging frameworks for discerning and constructing the possible forms and functions of identity in a post-feminist context where difference, rather than sameness, has been shown by many feminist theorists to be both the basis of oppression as well as the source of creative resistance. In contrast to metaphors of patrilineal inheritance as the basis of ontology, I will suggest that metaphors and myths of maternal origin and of the maternal body offer a more promising—if transitional—discursive frame for developing and articulating identities that stress multiplicity, connectedness, immanence, and dialogue and which do not seek either to overcome or to marginalise difference but rather to embrace it. I will consequently develop an alternative feminist model of origins and identity—a philosophy—based on poststructural and psychoanalytical feminist theories of maternity and the maternal body as a site of splitting, doubling, deconstruction, and process that is at serious odds with a patrilineal model. I focus in particular on the accounts offered by poststructural and psychoanalytic theories because, in my view, they offer a discourse on identity that explicitly resists reading identity in dualist terms. Poststructural theory in particular offers a novel approach to identity which could be termed an alternative ‘logic’ that eschews an ‘either/or’ model in favour of a thinking practice of ‘both/and’. As such, as I will argue, it suggests an opening out of ontology that engages with and transgresses the limits placed conventionally within western metaphysics on knowledge, gender, subjectivity, and power in a non-authoritarian and process-oriented way. The model of identity that I subsequently derive will be shown to have some important implications for how myth might be viewed, no longer in opposition to philosophy—as philosophy’s other—but rather as philosophy’s future horizon.

My work in this thesis is particularly in dialogue with feminist theory, and I derive many of my working assumptions and theoretical frameworks from the body of scholarship that has emerged out of the women’s movement of the twentieth century. Because of the contested and heterogeneous nature of the term ‘feminist’ some comment

is required regarding what I understand it to mean within the context of my work. As with most terms, defining 'feminism', and by implication, identifying myself as a feminist, presents an immediate difficulty because it suggests a homogeneity that is belied both by the history of its development and the diversity of its articulations and forms. The multiplicity of feminisms that together constitute 'Feminism' – whether early suffrage campaigns, discursive analyses of gender hierarchies, or lesbian activism, for example – indicates subtle differences of emphasis and context. Most feminisms are concerned, nonetheless, with promoting political and theoretical programmes that address what Sherry Ortner has described as the almost 'universal' secondary status of women (1974:67–71). In this thesis I will deploy the term 'feminism' and its derivative nouns and adjectives, to refer to a broad set of common themes and concepts, however differently expressed, which articulate a critical analysis of gender relations at both metatheoretical and empirical levels. In spite of the differences between feminists, therefore, in my view they do share several foundational premises: that gender is a fundamental organising category of experience and identity; that sexual inequality is a cultural construct; and, that an androcentric perspective that obscures its partisan nature has dominated fields of knowledge, shaping their theoretical paradigms and methods. Feminist theory, as the intellectual conduit of a diversity of feminisms, responds to these premises with an array of alternative proposals, all of which reflect an accumulated fund of knowledge and experience that is situated in an ongoing teleological and etiological analysis of gender inequalities and identities in all social and cultural arenas. Further, the possibility of conceptual and political transformation is the *raison d'être* of feminist practices, theories, and methodologies (Hawthorne 2005:3023).

Although not usually viewed as a feminist, Edward Said has described the task of 'cultural intellectuals' in terms that represent well what I believe the enterprise of feminist scholarship to be: 'not to accept the politics of identity as given, but to show how all representations are constructed, for what purpose, by whom, and with what components' (1994:380). As such, a feminist analysis of identity formation of the type I seek to undertake here necessarily enacts a deconstructive double gesture of critique and transformation: it seeks to assess and dismantle conventional structures of thought that inscribe identity within an oppositional and dualistic framework, where, amongst other forms of identification, masculinity is simultaneously normativised and valorised

at the expense of femininity, and then uses the intellectual space subsequently created to suggest creative and radical alternatives.¹

This is one of the reasons why my thesis gives such a central place to discourse as the ground of social relations, political struggle and the construction of identity. Symbolic representations—from origin myths to the paradigms of a scholarly discipline—are realised in discourse, which itself constitutes and creates the conditions for social action. That is, discourse helps shape visions of the world and structures roles and relationships in ways that need not, and frequently do not, register on a conscious level. In part because of the capacity of discourse to create experience, contemporary continental (poststructural) feminist theorists (whose work informs much of my thinking about gender and identity), have targeted discourse as a primary agent for the oppression of women (Marks and de Courtivron 1980:3). It is through discourse that challenges and disrupts established symbolic structures, they argue, that women may redirect their experience. Thus, I believe that if existing gender-based power relations are to be altered, the concept of gender must be viewed as socially and historically contingent, and politically charged.²

My task in this thesis, therefore, is one that I consider to be both descriptive and prescriptive. It is descriptive to the extent that I present an account of the construction and narration of identity as developed in the German search for origins and demonstrate that it was predicated on a set dualistic assumptions that enshrined fatherhood as the basis of national identity, necessitating the identification of and potentially violent exclusion of a manufactured alterity in the figure of the Jews and, in a more hidden way, of women. In so suggesting I do not mean to argue, as I have already stated, that this process was a specifically German one; rather I believe that it stands as emblematic of one of the processes and forms of identification that operate within western metaphysics more generally and which underpin a masculinist economy of the self-same.

My thesis is also prescriptive in that I seek to offer a potentially transformative model of identity predicated on a different 'myth of origin', that of the maternal function and the metaphor of maternal corporeality as defined within the field of psychoanalysis, and particularly as developed in the work of Julia Kristeva. I consequently develop an alternative and explicitly feminist model—a myth-as-discourse—of origins and identity

¹ See Greene and Kahn 1985:1–2 and Kolodny 1980:7.

² See Jardine 1985:47.

based on poststructural and psychoanalytical feminist theories of maternity as a site of splitting, doubling, deconstruction, and process that embraces—rather than requires—the destruction of alterity. As such, my intention is to propose just one way—not the only way—in which sexual organisation, and by implication other systems of identification that are predicated on an oppositional model of being, might be reimagined in such a way that difference does not inevitably result in disadvantage for those who are marginalised by these systems (Bem 1993).

In the title of this thesis I indicate that my work is a move ‘towards a feminist philosophy of myth’. In so stating, I am implying that my project is concerned with the ethics of narration within a feminist frame. My guide is Julia Kristeva’s concern to develop representations of difference that allow individuals to express their individuality without being marginalised or excluded on the basis of that difference in society. Much of her work has explored those processes through which (subject/object) boundaries are both broached and maintained dialogically and relationally. As such, I will argue that her theories present a fruitful means not only of broadening out the ways in which the self might be conceived (in both senses of the term), but that they also offer an insight into resolving and overturning the conventional division between myth and philosophy, placing them in dialogue rather than in opposition. I will suggest the ways in which this constitutes a feminist project.

While each chapter contains some original analysis or presentation of data, I consider the main academic contribution of this thesis to be as follows. Firstly, I align myself, although not uncritically, with a discursive approach to myth, outlined below, which views myth as an ideological tool for the construction of identities. However, I seek to demonstrate, more systematically than has hitherto been done, the discursive aspects of both myth and mythmaking. Secondly, I challenge the gendered lacunae of much of the scholarship in the field through an analysis of ‘myths of origin’ showing how the narration of origins is always, of necessity, a gendered affair and demonstrate the significance of this gendering. Thirdly, I challenge the ‘self-understanding’ of the field of mythology as originating with the Platonic distinction between *logos* and *muthos*, suggesting instead that if an origin for the field must be identified then it is the recuperation of myth in the seventeenth century onwards to which scholars of myth should turn. Fourthly, I develop a theory of patrilinearity as a dominant trope in western metaphysics that has been fundamental in asserting identity as singular and autonomous and suggest the ways in which myths of origin have assisted this process.

Fifthly, I argue that a theory of patrilinearity is a more contextually viable means of understanding the secondary status of femininity and women within the history of western culture than the concept of universal patriarchy that has been wielded by many feminists. I am thus not suggesting that patrilinearity is a universal model of identity, unaffected by change over time or by its place in diverse societies but am rather arguing that it has been a particular feature of the metaphysics that arise out of the Enlightenment within the western tradition of philosophy, regardless of what may be identified as its previous instantiations. Finally, I offer a reading of Kristeva's theories of maternity and extend it to consider how myths of origin might be considered differently.

II. Myth and Mythology: A Review of Literature

This thesis is, in addition to offering a feminist philosophy of myth, a response and contribution to a recent, ongoing, and controversial debate within the contemporary field of mythology which has argued for the need to view myth and mythmaking, as well as scholarly analyses and theorisations of myths and mythmaking, as political artefacts embedded in, productive of, and in turn produced by power/knowledge relations.³ The emergence of the debate signals a growing—and, I believe, long overdue—interest in the arguments and insights of the poststructural linguistic and deconstructive turn that has occurred in many areas of the social sciences and humanities since the 1960s. This interest has, in turn, led to an accumulating scholarly dissatisfaction with a number of interrelated trends that have defined the study of myth historically, but most significantly in the twentieth century. These include, but are not limited to: firstly, comparative studies of bodies of myths that do not pay enough attention to their individual cultural and temporal contexts and differences but rather extract universal structures and meaning from their analysis; secondly, a lamentable, but nonetheless telling, lack of self-reflexivity on the part of scholars of myth in assuming too sharply-drawn distinctions between their own work and theories and that of the mythmakers and myths under analysis; thirdly, a purportedly anti-reductionist tendency to consider uncritically the category of 'myth' as a self-evident and pre-existent *a priori* (that is, as a category that exists prior to any attempt to theorise and

³ Throughout the thesis I will be using the term 'myth' to indicate both a style of narrative and specific instances thereof, and as a discursive practice. The specific meaning I intend will be made clear from the context in which the term is used. I will use the term 'mythology' to refer solely to the study of myths rather than to collections of myths.

name its features and functions) and then to proceed from that assumption to render natural and universal that which is perhaps instead unnatural (constructed) and contingent; fourthly, a failure to recognise the discursive and dialogic qualities of mythmaking and myths and thus a tendency to ignore, fail to discern, or elide, the productive function of myth in a variety of power/knowledge matrices; and finally, the maintenance of a value-laden definition of myth as confined to a type of narrative genre that can be distinguished from other genres such as non-fiction, autobiography, history and so on, on the basis of its fictional content.

Some contemporary scholars of myth and mythmaking, whose work I review below, have thus argued that the overly narrow categorisation of myth as ‘fictional story’ should be deconstructed in order to trace the political (that is, value-laden and partisan) interests and effects that are at work in the maintenance of generic distinctions between truthful and false narratives and, further, that this self-imposed definitional limitation on the field of mythology should itself be constituted as an object of analysis. As such, these scholars have sought to expand definitions of myth to include any narratives or discursive forms, cultural practices, or historical events that are constituted publicly or privately as coherent and continuous, or as foundational for assertions of identity or identification, whether individual or collective.

As such, the classification of myth *qua* myth is seen by the scholars whose work informs my own, after Foucault, to constitute a discursive practice—a network of actions, ambitions, and narrative representations—which encode, construct, authorise, and reconstruct an aspirational and often didactic model of human identity whether communal and individual; they are stories through which individuals and groups narrate a network of possible relationships and forms of selfhood, in the process establishing the rules according to which affiliation and identification can be maintained and agreed upon. Myths are thus one of the primary mechanisms through which identity is formulated and are thus profoundly implicated in the politics of identity. They are, from this perspective, at once a reflection of prevailing social and personal identities and a powerfully coercive template for their formation. They signal moments of identity formation; they raise important questions about the nature of being and origin; they involve not necessarily claims about truth, but rather moves to assert or undermine discursive authority.

A clear example of the categorisation of myth as constituting a discursive practice in this regard, and one that I examine in Chapter 1, is how the distinction

between myth and truth was tactically embedded as a tool of domination in European expansionism and colonialism. The portrayal of colonised people as primitive and uncivilised by virtue of their belief in myths enabled the justification of the civilising mission of colonialism insofar as a scientific worldview was promoted as being able to correct the erroneous beliefs of these people. As such, the categorisation of myth as ‘superstition’ was connected to the conventional view of European writers in the nineteenth century that science (*logos*) had triumphed over myth and religion. Arguably, then, the classification ‘myth’ when examined in a broader context of political interests that determine its very classification might prove to be a far from innocuous practice. As McCutcheon states, myth can become ‘a master signifier that authorises and reproduces a specific world-view’ (2000:192). As such, the classification of myth has important implications for understanding the practices of mythologists. Their assessment of myth as a genre distinct from other forms of narratives or worldviews might well indicate the projection or transference of a series of value judgements and prioritisations that reflect their own context rather than conveying something self-evident in the data classified as myth (McCutcheon 2000:193). This is a point I will suggest below is a crucial aspect of myth, mythmaking, and mythology.

Mythology, like many myths, is, and has been, in this view a rhetorical mechanism for portraying variable, competing parts as static, consensual wholes. Furthermore, myths and theories about myths are alike inasmuch as both explain how things have become the way they are through a broadly narrative account. The difference, however, is that in the contemporary context myths are presumed to be false while the scholarship about them is, or at least aspires to be, true. In telling stories about the stories that others have told, mythologists attempt to position themselves as transparent adjudicators of ‘the truth’ of and about ‘myth’. They present their theories as objective and authoritative, even scientific, simultaneously promoting their own authority and credibility. However, like myths themselves, as I argue throughout this thesis, theories of ‘myth’ are produced according to, and in the context of, larger theoretical, ideological, and cultural concerns. The assumption of *objectivity*—with its implication of reliability—obscures not only the ideological content of mythology and the formative role that it has played in discourses of androcentrism, secularism, nationalism, anti-Semitism, and colonialism, for example, but also the construction of a

subjectivity that is very specifically situated in the production of a progressive and primordial European identity at least since the Enlightenment.⁴

As a ‘budding’ mythologist I am less interested in whether myths are true or false narratives than in what makes such a distinction both possible and necessary in the first place. It is here, with regard to challenging established symbolic structures, that Foucault’s insights on scholarly discourses are especially germane, particularly his suggestion that the development of a discipline necessarily entails the establishment of acceptable discourses, or ‘regimes of truth’. His work emphasises the need to recognise the historically and socially contingent—versus ontological or universal—status of ‘truth’ as such (see Foucault 1972; 1979). I believe that no subject or category of thought reflects some prior reality or fundamental truth—and in so saying I recognise that this constitutes somewhat of a truth claim itself—but that truth and falsity are manufactured and distinguished from each other purposefully and contingently; ‘truth’, as science fiction writer (an interesting juxtaposition itself) Ursula Le Guin has aptly phrased it, ‘is a matter of the imagination’ (1976:1).

A related means, therefore, through which myths function as discourses in the technical sense developed by Foucault is in the discursive distinction forced between truthful and false narratives, a process that inscribes a mutual imbrication of power/knowledge. Foucault’s conception of ‘discourse’ and ‘discursive practices’ opens a way to see the complex and productive interplay between narrative and material reality and the integral role of power/knowledge in producing and regulating discourse through generic distinctions such as that of myth. For Foucault, it is not a case of being able to separate out material reality from the discourses that frame it and give it shape and meaning. For example, he suggests that

we must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would only have to decipher; the world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favour....We must conceive of discourse as a violence which we do to things, or in any case as a practice which we impose on them; and it is in this practice that the events of discourse find the principle of their regularity.

(1981:67)

Of course, Foucault does not mean to imply that there is no non-discursive realm, no material world, but rather that the experience of, and any thinking about, that realm is always already, and then repeatedly, determined through discourse and the structures or limits it imposes on the activities of thinking and experiencing. Ernesto Laclau and

⁴ This particular aspect of the production of post-Enlightenment identity is discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

Chantal Mouffe indicate the way in which both the apprehension and the meaning of any 'non-discursive' object is filtered through discourse in such a way that accessing it 'outside' of discourse is itself, literally, meaningless:

The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a world external to thought....What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but rather the different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence.
(1985:108)

Although discourse determines the field of the knowable, Foucault also insists on the complex and productive interplay between the assertion of discourse and the forms of resistance it produces:

discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.
(1978:100–101)

Foucault thus argues that discursive practices are characterised by a 'delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories' (in Bouchard 1977:199). What interests Foucault in his analysis of discourse is the way that it is regulated:

In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality.
(1981:52)

In tracing the regulation of discourses, he describes a particular set of procedures which both constrain and produce them.⁵ These consist of three external exclusions (that is external, or prior to the production of discrete discourses): taboo or prohibition; the distinction between the reason/sanity and madness; and the distinction between truth and falsity (Foucault 1981). In the context of German romantic nationalism that I explore in Chapters 4–7, the positing of an unequivocal division between the true and the false—

⁵ Foucault (1981) also suggests two other sets of procedural practices that manage, produce, and constrain discourse: firstly, internal procedures of 'rarefaction' (a self-limiting of discourse) through the principles of the author (or, more specifically what Foucault refers to as the 'author-function'), commentary, and disciplinarity, all of which are concerned with classifying, distributing, and ordering discourse and function to distinguish between those who are authorised to speak and those who are not; secondly, determinative procedures that are neither internal nor external and which impose a limit on the roles a speaking subject can take up and which restrict access to the forms of discourse through the institutional forms like education.

both in the context of myth as a genre of narrative and the formulation of an 'authentic' German identity—was a fundamental feature of the retrieval of 'national' folklore; vernacular narratives were represented as the repository of authentic German identity, considered to contain the essential truth of Germanness and therefore were, in themselves, self-consciously authoritative. The cosmopolitan forms of culture that emerged out of the Enlightenment and against which romanticism set itself were, by contrast, false by virtue of their novelty, their rejection of the bounded, autochthonous, and primordial community, and their elevation of individual rationality over and against kindred feeling.

A central assumption of this thesis, therefore, refracted through my study of myth in the context of its retrieval as an object of study and as a means through which to assert national character in the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, is the notion, first conceived by Friedrich Nietzsche and rearticulated by Michel Foucault, that the 'will to truth' is instead the 'will to power' whose very authority is enabled by an essential dissimulation, a kind of willed, or at least willing, amnesia. As such, the will to power is connected to the desire to assert a stable notion of self that is only necessary because of the very instability of the self. Here I also follow Roland Barthes' theorisation (1973) of one of the functions of myth where myths are socially constructed narratives, usually produced by élite groups, the manufactured provenance of which is concealed by an assertion of these narratives as either natural, god-given, or pre-ordained, but in each case authoritatively truthful. As Edward Said has suggested,

Mythic language is discourse [that] cannot be anything but systematic; one does not really make discourse at will, or statements without first belonging—in some cases unconsciously, but at any rate involuntarily—to the ideology and the institutions that guarantee its existence....*The principal feature of mythic discourse is that it conceals its own origins as well as those of what it describes.*

(1978:321)

I thus consider the ideological practices that signify discursive mediation in the context of mythmaking to be not just an idealised horizon against which the social world is imagined, enacted, or aspired towards, but rather a sophisticated stratagem for disguising, mystifying, or distorting important aspects of real social processes. I will thus develop an approach to myth that seeks what Frederic Jameson calls 'the unmasking of cultural artefacts as socially symbolic acts' (1981:20).

In adopting a discursive approach to myth and mythmaking I seek to derive a theoretical framework that both takes seriously and challenges the ideological assumptions that govern mythmaking as a classificatory practice and which engender

myths' authority. Consequently, the story of 'myth' in the course of the past several centuries that I tell in this thesis reveals the term to be an ambiguous, unstable signifier that cannot be delineated in terms of a straightforward binary distinction between truth and falsity. In seeking to understand myths not simply as (true or false) narratives but rather as discursive practices I want to show that they are discursive insofar as the production and use of myths can, perhaps surprisingly, be granted an overdetermined status of truth (on the basis of their ability to legitimate predetermined questions of identity) in counterdistinction to other narrative genres that are at odds with the hegemonic accounts of a culture's past and present.

My implicit intention in this thesis is to test out a discursive approach to myth and therefore some comment regarding how the term 'myth' will be understood is necessary—albeit belatedly—and I will do this through reviewing briefly the mythological literature that has influenced my thinking in this thesis.⁶ Definitions of 'myth' in mythological scholarship are as varied and broad as myths themselves. Alan Dundes, for example, suggests that 'a myth is a sacred narrative explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form' and that 'the critical adjective *sacred* distinguishes myth from other forms of narrative such as folktales which are ordinarily secular and fictional' (1984:1). Wendy Doniger on the other hand suggests that myth is 'a narrative in which a group finds, over an extended period of time, a shared meaning in certain questions about human life, to which the various proposed answers are usually unsatisfactory in one way or another' (1996:112). In contrast, Roland Barthes, drawing on the structuralist linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure, states that 'myth is a language' (2000:11), by which he means that it is a structured system that has

⁶ I will not be reviewing the entire literature that constitutes the academic study of myth, largely because several thorough and lengthy surveys already exist and to repeat the data here would be redundant. William Doty's *Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals* (1986) provides a fairly comprehensive overview of the history of the study of myth, tracing it through the various approaches that have been proposed, such as functionalism, psychology, literary analysis, structuralism, and semiotics, amongst others. However, Doty treats 'myth' as a distinct genre of stories rather than as a discursive practice and so his work is of limited value here. Alan Dundes' *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth* (1984) similarly offers a wideranging overview of theories of myth through an assembly of various influential writings but again assumes 'myth' as an unproblematic category of narrative. Robert Segal's *Theorizing Myth* (1999) constructs a genealogy of individual myth theorists—Albert Camus, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Carl G. Jung, and Sigmund Freud—outlining their ideas and suggesting the ways in which they influenced each other and later thinkers. Because this thesis deals with several intersecting fields of academic knowledge—history, philosophy, feminist theory, mythology, nationalist discourse, and so on I am confining my review of literature simply to the field in which the thesis is most obviously set and to which I am responding. In the following chapters, where necessary or desirable, I review the relevant literature in the context I make use of it.

its own logic with which it establishes meaning and value through relations of both internal and external difference. While each of these definitions may convey something about myth, they are also revealing about the mythologists who offer the definitions. It thus becomes a question of why Dundes stresses the sacred nature of myth, why Doniger emphasises its longevity and believes that myths serve to resolve imponderable human dilemmas, and why Barthes makes a structural analogy between mythological narratives and linguistic systems.

By way of an answer Ivan Strenski notes that 'there may be the word "myth", but the word names numerous and conflicting "objects" of inquiry, not a "thing" with its name written on it. Myth names a reality that we "cut out", not one that "stands out"' (1987:1). Thus, myth, as an object of enquiry, lends itself to diffuse interpretations that encode the subjective viewpoint of the enquirer: the selection and the exclusion of meanings in pursuit of a definition serves the interest of the theoretician or mythmaker in providing a theory of myth. This is not, superficially speaking, a controversial point; after all, meaning (signification) depends on the articulation of differences and so to theorise about myth at all seems to necessitate its differentiation from other forms of narrative. However, the tendency to differentiate myth from other genres of narrative, and from the process of mythmaking is now contested and I will demonstrate in the first chapter of this thesis why this is so.

A second and related feature of much mythology is the tendency of its scholars to produce universalising explanatory theories. Thus there is, for example, the 'Structuralist School' which suggests that although the content, characters and events in myths may differ widely, similarities between myths are based on their structural homogeneity; or the 'Functionalist School' which argues that the key to understanding the role of myths in any given society is to notice the ritual context in which myths are related. The problem, as several scholars have recently noted, is that presenting a theory of myth that purports to be a complete explanation is inevitably reductionist and excludes points of view that might otherwise be illuminating about particular myths and particular contexts. Furthermore, such theorising is all too often undertaken without adequate reference to, or reflection on, competing or even complementary theories. Strenski, in particular, deplores this tendency when he remarks that the lack of serious engagement with even basic hypotheses plays 'fast and loose with the ideas of others' (1987:6).

Strenski was one of the first scholars in the field to suggest a discursively oriented approach to myth, and in so doing he effectively politicised the practice of mythology by deciding to take, not only the various theories of myth seriously, but the theorists themselves and to make them an object of study alongside that of myth. In his book *Four Theories of Myth in Twentieth-Century History: Cassirer, Eliade, Lévi-Strauss and Malinowski* (1987) he begins by suggesting that myths must be interpreted with reference to their theorists, that these theorists must in turn be understood within their historical contexts, and that even those contexts themselves should be placed in context. Strenski's readers would be forgiven for feeling trapped in a circular discourse of contextuality without ever being able to approach the ostensible object of study, myth. However, Strenski states from the outset that he is 'interested in context not as *explaining* texts, but as serving our *understanding* of them; interested not in determinant causal conditions, but in what gives them sense' (1987:9). He defines 'context' in a broadly discursive sense, concerned with both 'internal' and 'external' contexts and stating that it is not 'a dispensable biographical "background" note tacked onto a theoretical discussion, a parade of...unsubstantiated or inconsequential "influences", or...of dubiously relevant social and cultural details. Context is brought in because it matters; it makes a difference to the shape of the theory. It does not just add "local colour"'. Rather, it serves to place texts and producers of text within the ideological networks through which they gain their coherence and form and as such aims at the 'recovery of intentions' (*ibid.*).

In an intellectual context, therefore, in which the 'author' has been proclaimed dead, is such an approach either viable or advisable? Strenski's meticulous reconstruction of the internal and external contexts of each of the theorists he examines largely affirms his approach although it is itself undermined by his failure to interrogate his own motivations, contexts, and presuppositions. In the case of Cassirer, Strenski argues that he was motivated internally by a loyalty to German idealism and externally by the looming threat of irrationalism that appeared to be sweeping Weimar Germany. Both contexts appear to have led Cassirer to seek preserve the inherent value of myth as a precursor to science and as a necessary stage in human development which Strenski suggests constituted a motive rather than simply conveying a presupposition. What Strenski does not ask is *why* Cassirer was determined to remain an idealist. To suggest, as Strenski does, that Cassirer had been brought up as an idealist, transforms the ostensibly identifiable motive into a presupposition. His treatment of Malinowski is similarly partial. In seeking to explain what led Malinowski to substitute his early

romantic view of myth to a later pragmatic one he argues that internally Malinowski was motivated to shift his approach in order to fit myth within his embryonic pragmatist theory of culture. However what Strenski does not explain is why Malinowski developed such a theory in the first place and nor does he analyse the consequence of the change. He takes a similar approach to both Eliade and Lévi Strauss and runs into the same difficulties. The value of the book, however, and by implication Strenski's approach is that he enables his readers to think differently not only about the theorists concerned but also about the theories. However, I am left unconvinced by the idea that theorists' internal motivations and presuppositions are quite as plainly apparent as Strenski would have it. He suggests, for example, that

Theorists never *invite* us to join them in seeing myth in one way or another; they just *tell* us what it is. Theorists say 'is' when they should say 'ought'....[D]espite appearances, current concepts and theories of 'myth' have been *manufactured* according to the larger theoretical professional and cultural projects assumed by the twentieth century's leading myth theorists.

(1987:2)

However, what Strenski does himself is precisely *tell* his readers about the inner lives of these theorists. Further Strenski at no place puts the two forms of context—external and internal—in dialogue which suggests to me a rather simplistic assumption about the clear separation of the 'inner' and 'outer' worlds in which the theorist moves and thinks. Nonetheless, what Strenski does achieve very well is his demonstration that contexts are not easily separable from content, and this is a valuable concept for understanding how myths come to be told, retold, theorised and retheorised within a complex network of competing and sometimes contradictory contexts. In this thesis I suggest that the contexts of myth and mythmaking within the German search for origins were intertwined and as much of the meaning of the myths as what they relate.

Robert Ellwood (*The Politics of Myth: A Study of C. G. Jung, Mircea Eliade, and Joseph Campbell*; 1999) follows a similar approach to Strenski's insofar as he is interested in the autobiographies of the myth theorists he examines showing how and why they may have developed the types of theories they did, of what may have been personally at stake for them. Each theorist concerned has been the subject of some controversy in the last few years as their troubling political orientations have come to light. Ellwood's intention is to link theoretical rhetoric to the political contexts in which it emerges, and like Strenski, he generally succeeds in demonstrating the necessity of taking seriously the relationship between intellectual activity and the political commitments of scholars. He well demonstrates the extent to which these two aspects of the myth theorists' work

were intertwined. However, at the same time he clearly seeks to recuperate their tarnished reputations, and to preserve the core at the heart of their theories. As such he takes the attitude that myths and interpretations of myth have a humanistically oriented therapeutic value in spite of the particular politics that produce them and seems therefore, to adopt a very similar stance to the theories of myths that these three theorists promote. My own approach differs quite dramatically from that of Ellwood insofar as my feminist commitments—both political and personal if such a distinction can actually be made—define the tenor of my work, the purpose it seeks accomplish, and the assumptions that I operate on the basis of. I do not believe therefore that myths and theories about myths are innocent bystanders in the midst of the politics of the theorist. Rather they are directly products of and simultaneously productive of those very political commitments as I have outlined above and as I will argue throughout the thesis. As such, in this thesis I take a very deliberate, though not necessarily conscious stance towards my material maintaining a ‘hermeneutic of suspicion’ but also seeking to intervene in the discourses about myth and about the politics of identity in a way motivated by my own feminist orientation. I therefore do see my theorisation of myth in this thesis to be a form of mythmaking.

Russell T. McCutcheon and Bruce Lincoln are the theorists whose work informs my own approach more than any other myth theorist, largely in view of the fact that they take a similarly sceptical attitude to the possibility of separating out the political context in which theories of myths are created and the theories and myths themselves. McCutcheon’s article ‘Myth’ in the *Guide to the Study of Religion* (2000) suggests a determinedly and explicitly discursive approach to myth, mythmaking and mythology. He argues, for example, for a redescription of myth by thinking of it

not so much as a kind of narrative identifiable by its content...as a *technique* or *strategy*. Let us suppose that myth is not so much a genre with relatively stable characteristics that allow us to distinguish myth from folk tale, saga, legend, and fable...as a class of *social argumentation* found in all human cultures. Let us entertain the possibility that myths are not things akin to nouns, but *active processes* akin to verbs....A shift in perspective allows us to suggest (1) myths are not special...but ordinary human means of fashioning and authorizing their lived-in and believed-in ‘worlds’, (2) that myth as an ordinary rhetorical device in social construction and maintenance makes *this* rather than *that* social identity possible in the first place and (3) that a people’s use of the *label* ‘myth’ reflects, expresses, explores and legitimizes their own self-image.

(2000:199–200)

Lincoln (*Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology and Scholarship*; 1999) takes up a similar approach and he extends it to interrogate the ideological investments in myth by scholars of myth. He suggests that ‘students of myth seem particularly given to

producing mythic, that is, ideological, narratives, perhaps because the stories they tell about storytelling reflect back on them as storytellers themselves' (1999:209). In his book he covers some of the same terrain I travel over in this thesis (namely the theory of the *Urheimat*) and while I found much of it illuminating and helpful, Lincoln pursues his course in a fairly haphazard fashion, skating over some fairly crucial episodes without noticing their significance for the intersection of myth and mythmaking that he does suggest is the ground of mythology. He only very briefly mentions the Grimm brothers for example, whereas in this thesis I spend some considerable time considering their myth-collecting efforts as profoundly embedded in their political context and in their politics. I believe that the benefit of doing so is that several important aspects of the status of myth in nineteenth-century German are shown to be profoundly implicated in a series of ideological—both political *and* gendered, and aspect that each theorist neglects—contexts and discourses.

Bearing these preliminary observations in mind, it is not my intention to advance a singular definition of myth in this thesis. Rather, I intend both to focus on instances of narrative discourse where some narratives are characterised as 'myths' *vis-à-vis* other categories of discourse. As I have indicated above, my own theoretical position is both poststructuralist and feminist (although I do not assume these perspectives *a priori* or uncritically) in that it emphasises the ideological and ontological webs of meaning that connect narratives, identities, power, and truth in a relationship of circulating interdependence.

III. Structure of the Thesis

Contemporary mythology, I think it is safe to say, has been the study of a male line of thought, and as such it has itself produced a patrilineal narrative that has traced the protean meanings of myth—its functions, forms, structures, and implications—through the work of male scholars, naming them either as the fathers of the field or as the male inheritors of a paternal legacy. The story that mythologists have conventionally told about the origins and development of the field has been an entirely male script, originating with Plato's largely successful attempt to prioritise the truth-telling qualities of *logos* against the fantastical tale-telling of *muthos* as exemplified in the poetry of Homer and Hesiod. Interestingly, the field of philosophy which constitutes myth as its other also traces its origins to the same scene. Although the Platonic view of myth has been reproduced in the history of the field of mythology—certainly in the nineteenth

century—I do not want to acquiesce in the self-understanding of the field as one that begins with superstitious stories and ends in reasoned propositions that then serve to mirror and legitimate European modes of knowledge that privilege rationality. To do so would be to assume what I believe to be an unsustainable teleological continuity between the Platonic reversal of the valuations inscribed in the terms *muthos* and *logos* and the interest in myth as an object of scholarly interest that emerged in the aftermath of the Renaissance. Rather, I am interested in the conditions that made this interest not only possible, but also desirable, or, put another way, why it was that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries influential intellectuals of the day made it their business to investigate and define myth. What was it about this particular period that made the study of myth necessary? In Chapter 1, therefore, I begin with an analysis of the social and intellectual context in which myth became a new object of scholarly discourse, suggesting that the roots of contemporary mythology lie not in ancient Greece but rather in the seventeenth-century battle between the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment and the hegemony of the Church. However much this struggle may seem to have repeated the struggle between Plato and the poets to establish a ‘regime of truth’ there is little evidence that it was undertaken entirely referentially.

Foucault has suggested that at the heart of any unifying principle of continuous history lies the human subject creating and ensuring meaning for itself (Foucault 1972:12). In agreement with Foucault, my concern in Chapter 1 is thus to demonstrate that the categorisation of ‘myth’ *vis-à-vis* other types of narrative in the Enlightenment rationalist and parallel romanticist paradigms was allied to attempts to assert a discursive authority that could present certain forms of identity as self-evident, fixed, and naturalised. Each paradigm will thus be shown to have provided the basis for narratives, metanarratives, and self-referential discourses of varied ideological persuasions where myths embodied and advanced the interests of those who narrated or studied them. The core organisational framework of the chapter is an examination, in both the Enlightenment and romantic paradigms, of the way in which the categorisation and valuation of myth played into and was in large part productive of wider preoccupations with the form, substance, and status of human identity. I take seriously, therefore, Foucault’s argument that

One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that’s to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework. And this is what I would call genealogy, that is, a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is

either transcendental in relation to the fields of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history.

(1980:117)

This is another reason why I am reluctant to accept the account of mythology as originating with Plato. To do so would be to presuppose that the attempt to assert the unity and autonomy of the individual subject in the Enlightenment period was simply a reiteration of the classical Greek conception of the self. If this were the case, then the Enlightenment was redundant before it even began, at least insofar as it inaugurated a conception of the self that was novel to the western philosophical traditions. In contrast, I pursue my questions regarding the form and content of the formulation of subjectivity and its relationship to the categorisation of myth within the context of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, precisely because it was in this period that the notion of a unified subject in western philosophy was produced.

The Enlightenment view of myth was one that asserted myths' irrational and untruthful or 'primitive' qualities which had to be discarded by the enlightened individual. These qualities in turn were contrasted with the truthfulness of the Enlightenment's own scientific or rationalist discourse that was then allied to—and which to some extent justified—conceptions of the autonomous and reasoning individual and human progress. Moreover, this was achieved by placing myths at the origin of humanity's encounter with the world, seeing them as an explanatory tool. In the romantic view, against the Enlightenment imposition of universal ontology, myths were seen nostalgically as a retrievable reservoir—an origin—of ancient wisdom and collective identity that could offer the hope of a return to nationally specific and thus authentic forms of identity. These two moments that witnessed and provoked a new interest in myth represent, in my view, the point at which contemporary understandings of myth and subjectivity emerge, not as a seamless progression, but as discontinuous and mutually imbricated moments of articulation.

In addition to situating contemporary mythology historically in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Chapter 1 also serves to provide an overview of the intellectual context within which Johann Gottfried Herder, an influential myth theorist whose work I explore in Chapter 2, formulated his organic conception of the roles and functions of myth. Chapter 2 thus moves to examine the mobilisation of myth—and its connection to notions of ethnic identity—in the work of Herder insofar as it served as a precursor to the romantic attitude to myth that characterised German nationalism. The chapter begins by outlining the context in which the assertion of a politically stable

sense of German national identity was considered to be an increasingly urgent task but one that was made difficult, if not impossible, due to the regional and religious fragmentation that characterised the German-speaking territories and the French cultural and political imperialism that espoused a doctrine of cosmopolitanism and denigrated indigenous forms of culture. The consequence was a renewed expression of anxiety about the status and identity of the German people. However, the question of German identity had, in fact, long been a source of debate and controversy, particularly when the German people were compared, as they frequently were, to those European societies that could more firmly locate their cultural pedigree in classical Greece and Rome. In the second section of the chapter, therefore, I examine how the German humanists of the fifteenth century turned to Tacitus' *Germania* to claim a noble ancestry that was equal, if not superior, to those of other European nations on the basis of Tacitus' description of the ancient Germans as an autochthonous race that had never intermarried with others. I also trace how the recovery of Tacitus as a source for what became a cult of Germanic heroic virtue was further traced through the story told in Tacitus' *Annals* of the hero Arminius who defeated the Roman legions in 9 CE, and how it became a rallying force for cultivating German patriotism. The *Germania* and the story of Arminius, over the course of the next few centuries, were employed to render credible a belief in the unbroken continuity of the German people from a singular point of origin, an idea that was skilfully exploited by German humanists from the Renaissance onwards to oppose first Roman, and then French hegemony. In the third section of the chapter I present an overview of Herder's theories of myth, and show them to be founded on the assumption, secured through recourse to Tacitus, of the uniqueness of the German people (*Volk*). Herder's view of the history of human development is one in which its iterative and accumulative quality is emphasised: a community accrues its culture and tradition through its interaction with unique geographical, linguistic, and historical confluences, a process which is embedded in what he calls the *Naturordnung* ('natural order'). It is myth, for Herder, which inscribes the innate characteristics of the *Volk*, serving as the form *par excellence* through which their cultural values and worldviews are transmitted and Herder portrays this transmission in patrilineal terms. Herder's ideas, in this regard, also proved influential for the German romantics of the nineteenth century whose work I examine in Chapters 4–6.

Before tracing Herder's influence on the emergence of German romanticism, however, in Chapter 3 I examine the broader European context within which Herder developed many of his theories. It was a context marked by an accelerating nostalgia for a pure origin within Europe more generally, derived from a literal reading of Biblical narrative, and the support it found within eighteenth-century philology. William Jones' discovery of the lexical affiliations of Sanskrit with Latin and Greek as well as many of the other extant European languages was a decisive event in this regard. I therefore examine how, in the aftermath of Jones' work, the discursive construction of mythical ideas about race (in this case a belief in what were eventually designated as the 'Aryan' origins of the European race) and a conception of the *Urheimat* ('original homeland') were intertwined with the philological belief that both the original language (*Ursprache*) of humanity and (by implication) the original people (*Urvolk*) would be identifiable. Underlying all these hypotheses was an attempt to sever European ancestry from any dependent relationship to what was identified as the Semitic language group and thus to the Semitic religions of Judaism and Christianity. In Chapter 7 I follow up the significance of these debates for the claim, which was made in the latter half of the nineteenth century, that it was the German people who were original people and that it was their land which was the original homeland; before I do that, however, I break off my narrative to examine the parallel preoccupation with origins that occurred in Germany during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, one which played into the development of a nationalist rhetoric of unity and prestigious origins promoted by the German romantics.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the scholarly literature on nationalism in order to establish what I believe to be the form that romantic German nationalism took, and what its significance was for the formulation of national unity on the basis of shared cultural and myth traditions (rather than that on the basis of the contractual arrangements which underpinned the French and British concepts of nationality). I also examine how concepts of myth and gender are developed in cultural nationalism to produce a triadic rhetoric of national unity where vernacular myths are wielded as evidence of primordial unity and a golden age that forms the basis for a future utopia, and where the gender of the nation and of the national citizen is expressed in patrilineal terms, confining women to a passive role as symbols rather than active creators of the nation. I then apply these theories of nationalism to the emergence of the nationalist rhetoric produced by the German romantics in the first half of the nineteenth century

against a backdrop of French occupation. As such, I provide a chronology of the German romantic movement, presenting an overview of the main intellectuals who were involved, and showing how three interrelated elements—synthesis, providence, and nostalgia—characterised their efforts to define both the German national character and the retrieval of German origins.

Chapter 5 turns to look more systematically at the romantic nostalgia for origins as expressed in the recuperative efforts of scholars like the Grimm brothers who sought to elevate folklore to the status of a national myth tradition preserving the authentic nature of the ancient German character. I query the extent to which the folklore they collected in their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was actually a repository of authenticity, showing how their editorial practices involved a selective presentation of folk traditions, one that excluded its more bawdy elements and which promoted a bourgeois sentiment of respectability and a didactic attitude towards women as appropriately silent and passive. The implication of such a gendered division was that women had no role to play in the nation building effort. It further inscribed a patrilineal logic of national inheritance where traditions were passed from father to son.

Chapter 6 continues this analysis of the nostalgia for origins by examining Wilhelm Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie*, a publication that was the most systematic and comprehensive contribution to the creation of a national mythology. Grimm believed that the meticulous analysis of textual sources following rigorous philological principles, supplemented by the study of folk narratives and practices, would peel back the layers of the past and reveal the pure source of German myth traditions and therefore the character of the German *Urvolk*. Similarly to the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, Grimm presented this national mythology in patrilineal terms, that is, as rooted in the cult of the father god Odin who had created the world. Grimm used a variety of sources to sketch out the contours of German mythology, none of which were more important than Tacitus' *Germania* and the Scandinavian *Prose Edda*. The second section of the chapter discusses the outcome of Grimm's work as the effort to construct a national mythology moved out from the rarefied atmosphere of academic institutions into the public arena through art, monument building, and national festivals of remembrance and where the figures of Arminius, Germania, and Odin were celebrated as representatives of the spirit of the German people. The landscape in this process was thus simultaneously 'territorialised' and sacralised through the nostalgic depiction of the German past as a golden age that would be reborn through collective acts of

memorialisation. More importantly, this territorialisation was defined in entirely masculine and patrilineal terms.

In Chapter 7 I turn to examine the resulting production—within a German nationalist discourse heavily indebted to Herder's theories of myth, to the national mythology of the Grimms, and to the synthesising doctrines of the Schlegel brothers in particular—of a reinvented model of manly, pure, blond, and bellicose German Aryan identity. This assertion of identity was enabled by the utilisation of indigenous myths and by the 'discovery' of ancient origins, but it was given further support by a macabre counterpoint imposed through what was an actively conjured image of the effeminate and parasitic Jew threatening the purity of the *Volk*. As such, I follow up the discussion that I begin in Chapter 3, where a distinction between a Semitic provenance and an Indo-Aryan origin for the European people was enforced by scholars in search of the original language. I will argue that in these models of German identity a discourse of differentiation is clearly visible, one that is indebted to a variety of mythological strategies of identity formation and legitimation strengthened through the location of an uncontaminated and thus singular origin. The chapter concludes with a theorisation of the pivotal role played by the longing for an origin in the politics of German identity as predicated on a patrilineal model of inheritance and a discourse of differentiation.

Chapter 8 begins the task of placing all this preceding material within a more explicitly theoretical framework by analysing the patrilineal preoccupations of the German search for origins as symptomatic of a broader trend in the history of western thought whereby paternity is prioritised as the source of stable identity. In chapters 8–10 I discuss a number of theoretical paradigms in some detail, rather than by way of summary, in view of the fact that, within the field of mythology and the broader field of religious studies, theories of the type I deal with are quite often unfamiliar and have consequently not been given much attention. In the first two sections of Chapter 8 I discuss the emergence of some recent theories of narrative identity, particularly that of Paul Ricoeur. I show that although Ricoeur offers a relatively insightful account of the narration of identity, his analysis resembles in some important ways the triadic rhetoric of cultural nationalism discussed in Chapter 4. Ricoeur reproduces this model insofar as he proposes that the narration of identity is predicated on the need to resolve the paradoxical relationship of two forms of temporality but adopts an attitude towards temporality as necessarily linear and continuous within the context of narrative; and he suggests that linearity is foundational to the ways in which humans grant meaning to

their sense of self. In my view, therefore, the usefulness of his model is limited as regards investigating what may in fact be the fragmentary nature of human identity that linear narration tries to cover over. I analyse how such a model of continuity and linearity may in fact be indebted to a form of inflected and obscured patriliney, drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida and Hélène Cixous and their respective analyses of logocentrism and phallogocentrism to argue my case. My discussion of Derrida and Cixous leads me to an analysis of the paradox of subject-formation in which the self is placed in an agonistic relationship to others, along a series of oppositional axes where similarity/difference, singularity/duality, inclusion/exclusion, autonomy/dependence, and self/other are set up dialectically. In contrast, Derrida's and Cixous' critiques reveal selfhood to be defined by otherness rather than *vice versa* and their work enables me to analyse, as a first step, the ways in which the self might simultaneously narrate itself and be narrated in a dialogic rather than dialectic process. The implications of this dialogic interdependence imply the instability of selfhood, against the Enlightenment view surveyed in Chapter 1, and also of 'narrative' itself. With this alternative concept of narrative identity in mind, the chapter concludes with an extended analysis of the function and forms of patrilinearity within western metaphysics as situated within a phallogocentric economy of self/other and I argue here that the central feature of patrilinearity as a model of identity is an obsessive preoccupation with singularity, particular insofar as a father is asserted as a primal origin. This notion of singularity is analysed as fragile and tenuous, on the basis that paternity itself is uncertain, but the prioritisation of the figure of the father-as-origin and cause against the mother works to stabilise identity and construe it as linearly continuous.

In Chapter 9, I examine the work of Jacques Lacan in order to follow up the discussion of fragile subjectivity and patrilinearity I began in the previous chapter. Lacan's (post)structuralist rereading of Freud's psychoanalytic theories offer a means, I argue, of identifying the potential causes for the prioritisation of patrilinearity as a means of asserting the singular, autonomous, rational self. Although Lacan's elevation of (phallic) subjectivity as a universal model of ontology presents difficulties for a feminist theory of subjectivity, his work is important, I will argue, because it brings into question the Cartesian model of the self (discussed in Chapter 1) by demonstrating its dependence on the unconscious rather than the conscious realm. His theorisation of the three registers of infant development—the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic—further suggests that subjectivity is, from a very early stage in an individual's life,

constituted through an irresolvable division, or what in Freudian terms is understood as an original cathexis. That is, the individual comes to recognise itself as a self (ego) across axes of self and other, subject and object, inside and outside, lack and plenitude. Far from being self-contained and autonomous, the self, in Lacanian terms, is intersubjective, depending for existence on relations with others. My discussion of Lacanian psychoanalysis also serves as an introduction to the technical vocabulary used by Julia Kristeva to theorise subjectivity as ‘in process’ which I examine in the final chapter.

The final chapter I demonstrate the problems that emerge from the prioritisation of singularity—exclusion, oppression, and marginalisation—and point towards a feminist philosophy of myth, based on the work of Julia Kristeva, to posit that a ‘myth’ (in the sense of ‘narrative’) of maternal origin, extrapolated from a metaphor of the maternal body as split, in process, and oriented towards otherness with love, provides a preferable foundation for—and means of—construing subjectivity dialogically. I outline the main themes in Kristeva’s work and pay particular attention to her work on maternity as a being-towards-otherness. I will argue that her theorisation of a maternal economy implies an ethical orientation missing from patrilineal economies of identity. I therefore develop her work to focus in particular on the maternal body as a model for identity but I extend it to suggest that the maternal body may also serve as a metaphor for fragmented (rather than linear and continuous) myth where the tension between self and other, difference and sameness, truth and falsity are never mastered but always held in creative tension. As such, I will argue, against her critics, that Kristeva offers a solid and ethical framework for posing the self as multiple and transgressive, and as unable logically to resolve its paradoxical strands of singularity and multiplicity. I conclude by arguing that the maternal body as a discursively construed ‘myth of (multiple) origins’ inscribes a fruitful arena in which the political project of feminism, and indeed other liberatory projects, might find a way of challenging some of the deep structures of thought that have contributed to the marginalisation and exclusion of not only women but also of the groups of people and individuals regularly constituted as ‘other’ to the western normatively masculinised self. I therefore propose that a feminist philosophy of myth, mythmaking, and mythology must necessarily be a critical and political subversion of singularity and patrilineal logic affirmed by ‘mainstream’ mythology. Identity, place, origin, belonging, and myth may consequently be reconfigured as a network of contingent and transgressive sites of self-constitution that

open a space for an ethical orientation towards otherness and for breaking down the divisions between philosophy and its other, myth.

CHAPTER ONE

MYTH, HISTORY, AND IDENTITY: ENLIGHTENMENT AND ROMANTIC PARADIGMS

The story that mythologists have conventionally told about the origins and development of the field has tended to begin with Plato's largely successful attempt to prioritise the truth-telling qualities of *logos* against the fantastical tale-telling of *muthos* as exemplified in the poetry of Homer and Hesiod. The term 'myth' (*muthos*) first appeared in the archaic Greek tradition meaning 'speech' in the works attributed to Homer and Hesiod (*circa* eighth century BCE). The role of poetry as a form of *muthos* was presented by Homer and Hesiod, who were poets themselves, to be one wholly concerned with the transmission of truth. Poetry as *muthos*, in this view was not just true; it was also edifying, exemplary, authoritative, and masculine. In the earliest extant narratives of the archaic Greek tradition, namely the epic poetry ascribed to Homer (the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and Homeric Hymns) and to Hesiod (*Theogony* and *Works and Days*), *muthos* refers to a type of speech act which is understood to be candid, blunt and aggressive, but nonetheless completely truthful and always associated with men—kings, priests, warriors, and poets. *Muthos* is thus a speech act that is intended to enforce the compliance of those to whom it is directed, and only those similar in rank or status to the speaker can challenge or reply to it. In contrast, when *logos* is used in the Homeric epics it denotes speech that is duplicitous, cunning, persuasive through guile, but also soothing and comforting. As such it marks the speech, of women, the weak and young, and the shrewd (Lincoln 1999:10; 1996:7–11) and provides a weapon against the strong. *Logos* is thus viewed in the epics as both unprincipled and treacherous. However, the meaning and value of the *muthos/logos* couplet shifted considerably over time, so much so, in fact, that by the time of Plato's death (*circa* 347 BCE) its status had radically changed, largely as a result of Plato's own efforts to affect a reversal and to elevate *logos* above *muthos*. Plato's contribution to, and invention of, the problem of myth resided in his reorganisation of the vocabulary of 'speech' in ancient Greece (Brisson 1998:90). He contrasted non-agonistic *muthos* with the combative discourse of philosophical *logos* and negatively caricatured poets' myths as false, childish stories that could corrupt the credulous. Plato essentially sought to offer an ideological justification for the demotion

of poetry and *muthos* from their central role in defining Greek identity and to promote his own idealisation of philosophy and *logos* as more truthful, more masculine, and thus more authoritative.

Plato's oppositional classification of *muthos* and *logos* has become something of a master trope in popular and scholarly discussions of myth. However, as McCutcheon suggests, one of the reasons that Plato's reversal of the values of *muthos* and *logos* has been considered to be the origin of mythology, may be that it has 'more to do with the modern European "imaginary" Greece—among the most often used genealogical authorities for sanctioning everything from our own classificatory language to our culture—than with the historical Greek meaning of *mythos* and *logos*' (2000:191). As such, contemporary mythology does share in common with these ancient Greek poets and philosophers an attempt to legitimate a monopoly on the truth. Although the term myth is regularly used as an uncontested classificatory term to distinguish one kind of discourse or narrative from another, it seems, however, that the use of the category in contemporary scholarship is intellectually committed to an *a priori* clear division between fact and fiction, truth and falsehood, superstition and science, and, as I shall show, 'us' and 'them'. As McCutcheon suggests,

the power to label someone's story as myth, and to classify our world-view as 'scientific' over against their world-view as 'mythic' is not only to classify stories, but people (are they gullible or intelligent?), societies (are they uncivilized or civilized?) and cultures (are they primitive or advanced?). The apparently straightforward distinction between false and true tales (*mythos* vs. *logos*) is therefore loaded with social significance and consequence.

(2000:192)

The classification of *muthos* against *logos* in ancient Greece was certainly 'loaded with social significance' and was furthermore embedded in a broader social context where individuals, whether poets or philosophers, were engaged in a struggle for signifying supremacy, to be recognised as truth-tellers *par excellence*. Moreover, as I will show in this chapter, these distinctions have been rhetorically aligned to a series of moral, social and political values and I believe that this has implications for how mythology is practiced today. In this chapter I consider a different genealogy for mythology—the new interest in myth that arose in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—which, although it inscribed a similar struggle between rival 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1980:109–133) to that of the poets and philosopher in ancient Greece, provides, in my view, a more obvious starting point for the history of contemporary mythology. This is primarily because the way in which contemporary mythology has come to define itself has been with regard to the kinds of categorisations between myth and other types of

narrative genre that were created during the period in question. I will, however, return to the relationship between myth and philosophy in the final chapter of this thesis to demonstrate their interdependency.

Plato's famous critique of myth, with its stress on the truthfulness of *logos* against the mendacity of *muthos*, is a pervasive and popular understanding of myth that is said still to operate today; his dismissal of the mythic genre as unreliable and untruthful has been one of its most familiar formulations in both popular parlance and some forms of academic mythology. In the immediate aftermath of Plato's efforts, the category of myth became so thoroughly discredited that even the Romans, who borrowed so much else from the Greeks, did not adopt the term. Instead, they referred to the narratives the Greeks knew as *muthoi* with the term *fabulae* which, as Lincoln reminds us, 'had no major ambiguities at its core and conveyed the lack of seriousness with which [mythic] tales were regarded' (1999:x). However, the new intellectual concern with Greek culture from the Renaissance onwards led to a revival of interest in myths¹ and culminated in the formation of the field of mythology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which took two dominant forms: that of post-Enlightenment rationalism—where myths were viewed in 'Platonic' terms as the erroneous and superstitious productions of the primitive mind—and that of romanticism where myths were celebrated as the distillation of national character.

Any study of the recovery of the mythic genre during this period could be the subject of a lengthy monograph in itself. However, in this chapter I will offer a more attenuated account by outlining the intellectual history of concepts concerning myth in eighteenth-century Europe in order to provide the background for my later analysis of one of the most under-studied causes of the development of myth and mythology: that of the authorising function of the past, particularly as it asserts and exploits a point of origin. The utilisation of originary myths, supporting intricate imaginations of the past, underpinned the rhetoric of progress which dominated the ideological constellations of the Enlightenment, and out of which rationalist mythology emerged. This mythology served as a foil against which a second type of mythology was developed, which was the consequential romantic nostalgia for origins that fuelled the search for a set of myths upon which emergent nation-states could be founded. The conceptualisation of the past as a site of origin in both of these contexts facilitated—or manufactured—the authenticity and legitimacy of self-sustaining identities. Origins also acted to delineate

¹ See Bietenholz 1994; Mali 1992:136–209; Gay 1966:236–255; Feldman and Richardson 1972:3–164.

an unbroken and decisively linear, and as I will show, *patrilinear*, connection of the past to the present in the service of, for example, nationalist discourse, and simultaneously marked a point of departure for triumphalist discourses of civilisation and progress that marked European colonial projects. For both romanticism and rationalism, temporality infused a politics of spatiality where the mythicisation of the past enabled the relationship to, and reorganisation and redistribution of geographical territory. The romantic and rationalist narratives of the past were indispensable platforms from which to advance hegemonic articulations of individuality that had, and still have, profound implications for understanding the status and function of myths within the politics of identity. The aim of this chapter is thus to survey the philosophical and ideological contexts—firstly the Enlightenment and secondly romanticism—wherein contemporary and common attitudes towards myth were first formulated, before moving, in the following chapters, to an analysis of the material conditions that formed the enunciated content of romanticism in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany.

I. Ideals of Identity in the Age of Reason

Hugh Kenner sounds a cautionary note when he warns of the perils of fixing the Enlightenment in a historically coherent frame: ‘The Enlightenment lingers in our intellectual histories as a puzzling phenomenon, puzzling because it is so hard to say briefly what it was. It lacks chronology, it lacks locality, it lacks identity....It perhaps hardly knew that it was happening’ (1962:1). Nonetheless, I will tentatively propose a few aspects of the Enlightenment that will at least serve as a basis for the discussion of the features of Enlightenment thought as they concerned the definition of myth and its relationship to identity. My intention here is to paint a picture in broad strokes by way of summary rather than to offer a full survey.² Although the discussion in this section of the core features of Enlightenment thought and rationalism is broad, I trace them here in order to demonstrate the ideologies against which romanticism, particularly in Germany, sought to define itself. In addition, I realise that any attempt to classify

² Many excellent surveys already exist, the most notable being Hampshire 1957, Nicolson 1960, Harris 1964, Gay 1966, Berlin 1979, Solomon 1988, Hampson 1990, Lloyd 1993 and Outram 1995. Much of my thinking in this section has been guided, in particular, by Peter Gay’s *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (1966). He shows how the ideas and aspirations of the Enlightenment project were both the result and simultaneously productive of very particular and interpenetrating social and historical conditions. His work provides a thorough survey of the Enlightenment thinkers’ ideological constructs placed firmly within their cultural climate and thus offers a necessary corrective to the tendency, in many of the intellectual histories of the period, to offer contextually detached surveys of its core ideas.

historical events into categories like 'The Enlightenment', or even 'romanticism' are what Foucault has called the 'mutation of Order into History' (1970:220), that is, that these categories can only apply retrospectively and loosely to moments that, at the time, were not necessarily conceived of in those terms.³

(i) *Enlightenment Subjects: Reason and Being*

The Enlightenment signalled the rise of scientific knowledge and methods over the scriptural authority of the Church, and emerged first in Britain (Scotland and England) at the end of the seventeenth century, before penetrating the philosophical traditions of France (culminating in the French Revolution of 1789 with its rallying cry '*Liberté, égalité, fraternité!*'), Germany, Spain, and Italy. The philosophers and intellectuals broadly associated with the Enlightenment⁴ were by no means homogeneous in their approaches or philosophies and can further be understood to have contributed philosophical ideas that were differentiated both by geographical boundaries⁵ and by a generational evolution in ideas.⁶ However, together their work was a vehicle for a lengthy and wide-ranging debate that had at its heart a moralising belief in human autonomy, freedom, and equality, and the universal adequacy of (scientific) knowledge for the establishment of a just society organised around principles of individual rights.

A central feature of Enlightenment philosophy was its novel and influential elaboration of individuality. It was Descartes who, through his deductive system of cognition, initially posited what Jantzen refers to as the 'founding gesture of the subject in modernity' (1998:32). Jantzen is correct in situating Descartes at the effective beginning of modernity in the Enlightenment, particularly when considered in the light of Jean-François Lyotard's analysis of modernity's distinguishing qualities. Lyotard presents these qualities in terms of two 'metanarratives' (1984:31–37) which Frederic Jameson, in his foreword to Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, appropriately calls

³ For example, many of the thinkers considered representative of the Enlightenment paradigm did not consider themselves to be living in a time of Enlightenment. See Gay 1966:20.

⁴ For example, Francis Bacon (1561–1626) (although he is also classed as a Renaissance thinker), René Descartes (1596–1650), John Locke (1632–1704), Isaac Newton (1643–1727), François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire (1694–1778), David Hume (1711–1776), and Adam Smith (1723–1790) amongst others.

⁵ Hence, it is common to refer to the Scottish, French, and German (*Aufklärung*) Enlightenments, for example. See Porter and Teich 1981.

⁶ Gay suggests that the traditional chronology of the Enlightenment marks its beginning with the English Revolution (1640–1660) and its end with the French Revolution of 1789 and he argues that the Enlightenment 'was the work of three overlapping, closely associated generations' whose relationships he charts (1966:17).

'legitimizing myths' (1984:ix). These metanarratives can be understood as the essence of the modernist paradigm: that of the liberation of humanity by progress and that of the unity of knowledge. The first metanarrative suggests that, for intellectual élites, knowledge of the unfolding of history, pursued, communicated and managed by these élites, is capable of freeing humanity from the fetters of ignorance, as it demonstrably elicits and enacts progress. The second metanarrative promotes an abstract, rational scientific method in the service of emancipation through accumulated funds of knowledge. Under this formulation the particular is subordinated to the abstract; the past to the present; the local to the universal.

Descartes suggested that the individual is stable, coherent, and knowable and that the truth of existence can consequently be conceived and established: 'I am, I exist, whenever I utter or conceive it in my mind, is necessarily true' (1969:67). Extrapolating from this idea, and arriving at his famous statement '*cogito ergo sum*',⁷ Descartes proposed that the primary attribute of the individual is that it is essentially interior, conscious, rational, autonomous, and universal—no physical conditions or differences can substantially affect how it operates. It could know itself and the world through reason, or rationality, which, for Descartes, was the highest and only form of mental functioning.⁸

Some of the other thinkers in the Enlightenment mode, most notably Newton and Francis Bacon,⁹ anticipated Descartes' formulations by positing that the mode of knowing produced by the objective rational self was science, which in turn could provide universal truths about the world regardless of the individual status of the knower. This utopian vision suggested that the knowledge produced by science was truthful and eternal and could only lead toward progress and perfection, an idea well encapsulated by one of the architects of the French Republic, Marquis de Condorcet, writing while he was in prison awaiting execution in the aftermath of the Revolution:

How consoling for the philosopher who laments the errors, the crimes, the injustices which still pollute the earth and of which he is often the victim, is this view of the

⁷ See Descartes 1637; 1644.

⁸ Hume and Locke both objected strenuously to Descartes uncritical confidence in abstract reason and speculation (the *cogito*), suggesting instead the ability of human beings to know the world through, in Locke's case, their senses, and in Hume's case, the role of nature in providing a model of reasonable behaviour. Nevertheless, they assumed the central Cartesian metaphor of the distinction between mind and body, holding that knowledge is concerned with the examination of the mind (Solomon and Higgins 1996:188).

⁹ Bacon is widely considered to be the founder of the modern scientific tradition—with its emphasis on the disinterested knower—and in particular theorised science as the ultimate realm of human knowledge over nature (Solomon and Higgins 1996:165–166; 177; Gay 1966:233)

human race, emancipated from its shackles, released from the empire of fate and from that of the enemies of its progress, advancing with a firm and sure step along the path of truth, virtue and happiness.

(1955:35)

Thus, a further idea was that all human institutions and practices could be analysed by knowledge and improved. As Descartes asserted, 'one may reach conclusions of great usefulness in life, and discover a practical philosophy...and thus make ourselves masters and owners of nature' (1969:46). Scientific knowledge as neutral and objective therefore stood for Enlightenment *philosophes*—particularly for Bacon and the intellectuals who immediately followed—as the paradigm for any and all socially useful forms of knowledge.

Another important aspect of the Enlightenment formulation of identity, and its extended prescription for the activity of scholars concerned with the validation of rational epistemology¹⁰ was the definitive opposition presumed between mind and body, known now as Cartesian dualism. Jantzen suggests that, for Descartes, the 'thinking being defines itself by contrasting itself to all that can be considered not to think. The body and the material world become the non-thinking Other of the rational subject, to be brought under its strict control and mastery' (1998:32). Distinguishing the mind and body in this way could ensure the priority of science as the mode of knowledge *par excellence*—as the tool with which the physical world and the laws of nature could be reliably comprehended—and could enable the promotion of rationality as transcendent and disembodied. Thus, the equation of rationality and mind with truth was placed beyond doubt and the body was associated with a second-order, degraded ontology.

The most significant characteristic of individuality presented in this mode is its universal posture. As Solomon and Higgins wryly remark, 'the subjectivity so celebrated was, without a doubt, a distinctively European subjectivity. The objectivity it claimed, however, was global' (1996:178). Crucially, this narrative of universality coincided with, and was productive of, European colonial expansion. The vision of progress elaborated by the philosophers of the Enlightenment in fact necessarily depended on economic prosperity that not only could support intellectual endeavour, but which could enable the realisation of a 'just' society, that is, one where individuals were granted the rights of equal citizenry. The idea of the just society however was

¹⁰ It was Descartes, again, who established the basic principle of certainty and immunity from doubt for philosophical investigation in the Enlightenment. Thus in his epistemology, reason itself had to be ratified and could not be assumed to be self-evident (Solomon and Higgins 1996:183).

initially only actuated within the borders of élite and educated reaches of European society: only those who had achieved the appropriate level of civilisation (by virtue of their powers of reason and domination of nature) were able to appreciate its benefits. The intention was, however, that the advantages of civilisation could, and would, eventually be extended to both the benighted lower classes and non-European colonised populations once they acceded to élite European cultural superiority. However, this ostensibly benevolent view elided the fact that the affluence that made the Enlightenment model of civilisation possible came from the toil of others, through co-opting the lower classes in the project of industrialisation, through slavery, and through the colonial administration of the wealth of other nations.

(ii) Religion, Reason, and Secularism

To a large extent, the Enlightenment's most prominent ideas mirrored, at least structurally, those that had been promoted in the dominant medieval and post-Reformation theologies of the preceding centuries, particularly insofar as they posited universal truths that were accessible to human consciousness. However, it was the Enlightenment account of ontology in terms of rational individualism that also served—forcefully and with hostility towards a system dominated by clerical élites—to mark it apart, particularly in the way that it stressed the autonomy of human reasoning and experience—rather than divine revelation—in comprehending the nature of the cosmos, and the place and function of individuals within it. The hegemony of the Church was thus increasingly viewed as an obstacle in the way of the more modulated idea of human individuality articulated in Enlightenment epistemology (Gay 1966:59). Truth was now not to be found in the Scriptures but in the individual mind of the rational, autonomous person who was the only reliable source of truth. An inevitable consequence of this realisation was the challenge to the relationship of church and state, an example being the collapse of the *ancien régime* centred on the belief in the divine right of kings to rule in the aftermath of the French Revolution.

The roots of this splenetic programme are to be found in the deist school of thought of the latter seventeenth century, in that it offered a prolegomenon to the ruthless anticlericalism prevalent amongst the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment (see Gay 1966:374–382; Feldman and Richardson 1972:25–35). Deism initially emerged in England but quickly spread to mainland Europe and was arguably as revolutionary as the Enlightenment's rejection of Christianity as a tradition mired in superstition and the

iniquitous imposition of hierarchical arrangements justified on the basis of divine sanction. The deists¹¹ can be classed as a school of thought in the sense that, for all their differences, they collectively worked to reject the authoritative Christian teaching of divine revelation in favour of emancipated and purely rationalistic speculation concerning religion. Many of the English deists were broadly materialistic in their doctrines, while the French thinkers (for example, Voltaire), who subsequently built upon the foundations laid by the English deists, were almost exclusively so. Others were content simply to offer veiled, cautious criticism of ecclesiastical authority in teaching the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures, and of the belief in an external revelation of supernatural truth given by God to humanity. There was a considerable divergence in method observable in the writings of the various deists, but in terms of the substance of their critiques they were largely in agreement: deism, in all its forms, was uniformly hostile to the traditional teaching of revealed religion and the assertion of the clergy that they alone could act as mediators of such a revelation (see Feldman and Richardson, *op. cit.*).

Broadly speaking then, the deists as a group suggested that religion could and should be reduced to what could be verified about God—‘his’ purposes, and an individual’s religious duty—by reason alone. Most deists held that all religion was, in its origins, monotheistic and a rational and natural response to the fact of God’s existence and benevolence as displayed in nature. Moreover, they believed that the proliferation of religious cults and polytheism, the invention of elaborate rituals, mysteries, and the imposition of priestly authority, were all corruptions of the one true, natural religion. Edward Herbert, for example, in his *De Veritate* (‘On Truth’; 1624) rejected the claims of revelatory religion, an infallible Church, and the authority of priests, as perversions of ‘true religion’. True religion, for Herbert, was a wholly rational matter consisting in an acceptance of ‘common notions’ that all people could share: a belief in one supreme and good God; a conviction that God’s authority and goodness was based on the pious being rewarded and sinners being punished both in this world and the next; and a belief in the necessity of repentance for sins. There is, of course, nothing in this formulation that need necessarily be considered as uniquely Christian, and indeed Herbert’s comparative discussion of ancient religions in *De Religione Gentilium* (‘On the Religion of the

¹¹ Gay 1966, *op. cit.*

Gentiles'; 1663) attempted to demonstrate a universal acceptance of these beliefs throughout history.¹²

The deist movement in England was the inevitable outcome of the political and religious upheaval inaugurated by the Protestant Reformation's outspoken and wide-ranging opposition to the authority of the Catholic Church; the Reformation had initiated a slow revolution in which previously unassailable articles of faith were challenged and reconceived. Accessible vernacular translations of the Christian scriptures were substituted for the mediating authority of the clergy; state religion replaced global Catholicism and resisted Papal jurisdiction. However, although these revolutionary innovations provided a clearly viable discursive shift, the very spirit or mental disposition that proposed and then sanctioned them as substitutes in the first place could not logically rest content with them (see Gay 1996:207–212). The full implications of the principle of an individual's autonomous judgment in matters of religion were not yet wholly apparent nor, indeed, rationally articulated, particularly when applied to the notion of the Bible as the word of God. However, it was simply a matter of time before this novel emphasis on human autonomy in relationship to the divine would have to proceed to a new examination and then a final rejection of the foundational veracity of the Christian faith.

Undoubtedly the new discoveries of the sciences (in astronomy and physics by Newton and Boyle, for example), the stringent empiricism championed by Bacon, the philosophical doubt and rationalistic method of Descartes, and the political and social upheavals of the times, all laid the groundwork for the coherent and methodical criticism levelled at revealed religion in the Enlightenment. Nonetheless, these themselves must have been contingent upon the break with the authority of Rome through the assertion of individual autonomy that the Protestant Reformation represented. Although the early tracts of deism were fairly veiled and intentionally indirect in their attack upon divine revelation, alongside the English Revolution and the civil and religious liberties consequent upon it, and with the spread of the critical and empirical spirit exemplified in the philosophy of Locke, for example, the deists

¹² Other deists, such as John Tolland in his *Christianity not Mysteriorious* (1696) and Matthew Tindal in his *Old as the Creation* (1731), attempted to show that Christianity, when approached from a deist point of view, was an exemplar of rational religion if stripped of its emphasis on divine revelation and priestly interference. They drew inspiration from the new science of Isaac Newton and Robert Boyle (1627–91) to argue for the existence of God through 'an appeal to the evidence of his "general providence" displayed in the order of nature, and by more traditional reasoning based on the idea of God as a self-existent or necessary being' (in Bell 1990:7).

nonetheless prepared the ground for the full rehearsal of the case against Christianity that was undertaken in the later stages of the Enlightenment.¹³ Their work was to lead to an explicit hostility towards revealed religion in all its shapes and forms.

It was in the Enlightenment that the accusation was most successfully levelled that the Christian scriptural tradition had produced authoritarian and hierarchical social structures that foreclosed the autonomy of the individual now being forcefully articulated by the *philosophes*. Enlightenment thinkers looked instead to classical Greek and Roman texts as inspirational precursors,¹⁴ most frequently citing Cicero and Lucretius who questioned the existence of any deities and took what would now be called a 'secular' view of the human condition. As Gay has argued, therefore, 'all over Europe and America, for all philosophes alike, the ancients were signposts to secularism' (1966:44). In keeping with this 'secularist' agenda, many writers of the Enlightenment associated religious fervour with irrationality and authoritarianism. Instead they believed, as Hutton notes, that 'the only sensible alternative to Christianity [was] either atheism or belief in some vaguely defined Supreme Being, with whom humans had no personal relationships' (1999:21). Pagan religions (that is, those of the ancient Near East and 'idolatrous' undercurrents in medieval Christianity) were viewed as erroneous and despotic traditions which were now to be superseded by rational scientific methods. David Hume, for example, in tracing the origins of religion, postulated an evolutionary (and progressive) development from polytheism to monotheism, and, while he lauded the former for its tolerance, he considered it to have been a vulgar and absurd phase of human history that was to be corrected by scientific evidence and reasoning (Gay 1966:167).

(iii) History and Myth: Enlightenment Models of the Past

The Enlightenment thus saw a cumulative antagonism emerge between Christianity and rationalist thought, which in turn provoked new forms of historiography and mythology that were characterised by an attitude towards the past that was alternately pessimistic and admiring. The Enlightenment's consideration of history was bifurcated and unashamedly partisan and the characterisation of history as an ongoing competition between two types of mentality led the *philosophes* to propose a novel schema of periodisation. It was one where the past—understood to be global, but in reality a

¹³ See Gay 1966:371–401.

¹⁴ The interest in the texts, philosophies, and culture of what they viewed to be the Classical age led to its categorisation as 'Neo-classicism'.

particular version of the European past—was divided roughly into four great epochs: the civilisations of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt; classical Greece and Rome; the Christian millennium; and the contemporary Age of Enlightenment where reason was being reasserted. As Gay suggests, these four epochs were ‘rhythmically related to each other: the first and third were paired off as ages of myth, belief, and superstition, while the second and fourth were ages of rationality, science, and enlightenment’ (1966:34).¹⁵

Enlightenment *philosophes* considered themselves to be re-enacting the age-old struggle between reason and unreason¹⁶ that, in their view, had been fought and lost in the ancient world. However, it was a struggle they believed they were now destined to win. Those Enlightenment thinkers who concerned themselves with the past in this way were plainly motivated by a contemporary agenda—the final demise of Christian hegemony—and it gave their work political urgency and a sense of unwavering determination, as Gay argues:

the philosophes divided their past into two sectors and put both to work. The Christian sector gave them an adversary worthy of their hostility: when the philosophes proclaimed that it was their mission to eradicate bigotry and superstition, they meant that it was a historic mission. At this point...history became not past, but present politics: the philosophes never tired of pointing to the record Christians had compiled through the ages as evidence confirming the need for drastic remedial action in their own time. In the same manner, the pagan sector [classical Greek and Rome] had its uses: it supplied them with illustrious models and a respectable ancestry.

(1966:31–32)

This division between Christianity and the ‘pagan’ past of classical Greece and Rome was predominantly presented in terms of a struggle between two mentalities (mythological or religious and critically rational or scientific) that were defined by their prevailing political styles, epistemological preoccupations, and intellectual institutions. For the Enlightenment *philosophes*, the age of Christianity was dominated by superstition, crude barbarism, and resolute ignorance; the Classical age was, in contrast, laudably nourished by reason, truth and humanity (see Gay 1966:59–71).

¹⁵ The *philosophes* did not, however, propose this scheme as a rigid system; they conceded that the Christian millennium was more rational and more civilised than earlier ages, and they certainly believed in the superiority of their own time over Greece and Rome. The exceptions that they allowed, and the caveats that they offered, however, did not invalidate, for them, their broad thesis; they still considered the history of philosophy to be a history of the rise of reason out of myth during the period of classical antiquity, its calamitous regression under Christianity, and its triumphant rediscovery in their own time. See Gay 1966:34–35.

¹⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) suggested, for example, characteristically invoking a metaphor of combat, that the ‘pure insight’, which he believed to be characteristic of the Enlightenment, ‘only appears in genuinely active form in so far as it enters into conflict with belief’ (1931:560).

The *philosophes'* attitude towards Greek and Latin classicism, as the esteemed ancestor of their own commitment to reason and empirically demonstrable truth, functioned in three ways. Firstly, it suggested a venerable intellectual pedigree that lent an aura of authenticity and authority to their rationalist philosophies. This was largely because knowledge of classical literature was the common possession of educated men in the eighteenth century. Samuel Johnson, for example, remarked that 'Classical quotation is the *parole* of literary men all over the world' (in Boswell 1799, IV:102). Secondly, a strong thread of identification with the ancients was discernible and it served as a useful rhetorical device in establishing the nobility of the *philosophes'* cause. Rousseau, for example, considered himself to be

ceaselessly occupied with Rome and Athens; living one might say, with their great men, myself born Citizen of a Republic and son of a father whose patriotism was his strongest passion, I took fire from his example; I thought myself a Greek or a Roman.

(1992:9)

However, identification with the ancients was also a signal of the *philosophes'* own advancement; they believed that they stood above classical antiquity as its masters, giving them a sense of the importance of their task as well as a licence to exploit Roman and Greek sources astutely and, sometimes, shamelessly.¹⁷ As Gay suggests, 'Even more often than they intended, Enlightenment historians looked into the past as into a mirror and extracted from their history the past they could use' (1966:32). They could exploit their sources because they approached their predecessors with the self-confidence of men who could demonstrate a solid command of their material and who could put it to work with a rigour and rationality that would ensure the success of the Enlightenment project. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Greek and Latin classicism also offered the *philosophes* a convincing alternative to Christianity, where the Platonic rejection of myth and superstition, and its elaboration by Lucretius and Cicero, were invoked as a beacon of hope.

The four-period scheme dominated philosophical history during the Enlightenment and it was couched in a language that repeatedly drew attention to the regenerative and emancipatory potential of the Enlightenment project. Jean Le Rond d'Alembert (1717–1783), for example, wrote of the 'revival of letters'—out of a long period of dark ignorance—that the Enlightenment represented, and of the 'regeneration

¹⁷ The identification with one's forefathers as a legitimating device, and the subsequent assertion of mastery over them, is a key theme in this thesis and is one that will be elaborated and analysed in Chapter 8 when I consider the ontological and epistemological mechanisms that produce and maintain authority and authorship in the politics of identity through recourse to paternal origins.

of ideas,' the 'return to reason and good taste', the 'revival of spirits', and the 'rebirth of light' (2000:102–5). Rousseau viewed the medieval age as a step back into the worst excesses of antiquity (1959–1964, III:6) and Hume similarly wrote that 'having at length thrown off this yoke, affairs are now returned nearly to the same situation as before, and EUROPE is at present a copy at large, of what GREECE was formerly a pattern in miniature' (1878, III:183). The rhythmical view of history thus complemented the broader emancipatory agenda of the Enlightenment (Gay 1966:36). In viewing history in the way that they did, the *philosophes* simultaneously promoted their own role as the heroic champions of a new kind of rationality whose success was inevitable. Here the Enlightenment's celebrated theory of progress revealed itself most keenly, particularly insofar as it conveniently articulated the belief, common amongst the *philosophes*, that the past's oscillation between 'Ages of Philosophy' and 'Ages of Religion' was not endlessly iterative and that the Enlightenment thus represented a break with the past should its insights be acted upon.

Both the four-epoch periodisation as the organising principle of Enlightenment historiography, and the theory of progress, had important implications for historiographical methods and subject matter. Enlightenment historiography, for all its zealous polemicism, was important and groundbreaking in its recognition of what are now commonplace notions amongst historians. Firstly, that historical epochs each have a dominant intellectual demeanour which informs their knowledge production, worldview, and behavioural norms; secondly, that history has its discontinuities and dramatic revolutions as well as its more gradual shifts in political and social realities; and finally, after Foucault, that political and religious power functions to define and secure the parameters of the knowable. As a result, Enlightenment *philosophes* imposed rational, critical methods of study, borrowed from the epistemological models of the natural sciences, on social, political and intellectual developments. Again, the intention was to oppose Christianity, and in particular its model of history and its methods—where Providence and divine revelation were the guiding principles—which were considered to be only concerned with chronologies and genealogies, uncritical, vapid hagiographies of saintly figures, and vulgar and simplistic research into sacred texts (Gay 1966:31–38). Instead, the *philosophes* set out to provide an alternative, universal, and secular history of human thought and society, guided by the principles of reason and the hope of progress. For example, in his *Essay on the Manners and Mind of Nations, and on the Principal Facts of History from Charlemagne to Louis XIII* (1769), Voltaire pushed historic

time far back beyond Genesis to primordial geological time, arguing that an immense amount of time was needed for mankind to develop societies, arts, and sciences. He began his history in the Far East (China), rather than with the creation account in the book of Genesis which Christian historians, or at least those influenced by Christian doctrine, had used as their starting point,¹⁸ and he then moved gradually westward to India, Persia, Arabia, to Palestine and the birth of Christianity, and then finally to Rome. He considered the ancient Chinese and Indians to be similar to enlightened European *philosophes*—liberal, pragmatic, and benevolent, their religious traditions preserving a virtually untouched naturalism. For Voltaire the East served as a much earlier model and source for Judaism and Christianity and, in his view, it was certainly morally superior. However, while his portrayal of the East is seemingly tolerant and unprejudiced, his intention was to denigrate Christianity and its model of history rather than to celebrate non-European cultures; Voltaire wished to rewrite the past so that the Bible was seen to have played only a minor role (Figueira 2002:11).

The Enlightenment production of this new type of history, and the promotion of secularism, unsurprisingly influenced attitudes towards myth, where Plato's conflict with poets and mythmakers was once thought to be being re-enacted. Broadly speaking, three types of mythology were prevalent: Christian, deist, and rationalist, the last of which was championed by the *philosophes*. For eighteenth-century Christian thinkers, such as the Abbé Fourmont (1683–1745), Samuel Shuckford (d. 1754), and Bishop William Warburton (1698–1779), the term 'myth' signified pagan fables and religion, particularly those of classical Greece and Rome and Egypt, which were either dismissed entirely or reconciled with Christian doctrine. As Feldman and Richardson note, 'myth' was considered to be 'exactly equal to *false*, while *gospel*, meaning Christian religious stories, was exactly equal to *true*' (1972:3). The most common understanding of myth in this view, therefore, was that it was a degenerate version of biblical truth; myth was interpreted as an invention of the devil, and the pagan gods were identified with fallen angels.

¹⁸ Voltaire intended his history to complete and correct the work of the historian Bishop Jacques-Benigne Bossuet (1627–1704). Bossuet's *Discourse on Universal History* (1681) presented the historical past as both preparing for and culminating in Israel and Christianity, marked by God's providence. He began his history with Adam before moving on to the Flood, God's covenant with Abraham, then to Moses, Troy's downfall and capture, the establishment of the Temple in Jerusalem, the birth of Christ, and finally to Christianity's alliance with Rome. Voltaire brings this history up-to-date but he also makes clear that he rejects Bossuet's Christian-universal history in favour of a new secular 'philosophy' of history, where providence is replaced by progress, and where a Hebraic origin is replaced by one situated in the Far East.

The deists, among them John Toland (1670–1722) and John Trenchard (1662–1723), tended to the view that Christian religious practices and beliefs as well as pagan myth and custom were equally ill-considered adulterations, not of Christianity but of the original natural religion. Toland suggested, for example, that the polytheism found in so many myth traditions was a deliberate fabrication by priests who were cynically concerned to secure their own status as ritual specialists and mediators between the gods of their invention and the common people. Similarly, John Trenchard, in his *The Natural History of Superstition* (1709), offered an analysis of mythmaking as a form of psychopathology akin to fanatical religiosity. He suggested that the religious impulse tended to evolve from simple faith (in the earliest stages of natural religion) to unchecked fervour, and finally to an intolerant fanaticism that encouraged excessive proselytisation and the persecution of non-believers. Where Toland had examined myth as a form of primitive savagery in the past, Trenchard was clearly concerned to challenge contemporary forms of religiosity, in particular witchcraft and the spread of fanaticism in the eighteenth-century church. Myth, for Trenchard, echoing Plato, suggested a mentality predisposed towards zealotry because it inspired and stimulated emotional responses that were wholly unaffected by the application of reason.

Rationalist *philosophes*, such as Bernard Fontenelle (1657–1757) and Hume, tended to the most extreme view, in that they viewed all myths as savage and absurd, only useful for providing evidence of primitive mankind's irrational and deluded attempt to explain the natural world. Fontenelle's influential essay *Of the Origin of Fables* (1724)¹⁹ maintained that myths were both the product of primitive psychology, that is, they were credulous attempts, arising out of fear or awe in the face of nature, to provide explanations of natural phenomena, and, in their more far-fetched forms, the result of an accumulation of exaggerations by generations of mythmakers. He sought universal explanations for the origin and transmission of myths, based on his assumption of a universal human nature, and thus situated the origin of myths in mental processes that he considered were ubiquitous across time and space. Hume firmly and caustically rejected myth as patent superstition and historical distortion, as did Voltaire on occasion (Gay 1966:341–342).

¹⁹ Both Andrew Lang (1844–1912) and Lucien Levy-Bruhl (1857–1939) considered Fontenelle's work on fables to be groundbreaking. In his *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (1887), for example, Lang included an appendix called 'Fontenelle's Forgotten Common Sense'. See Feldman and Richardson 1972:7–8.

In summary, then, Enlightenment attitudes towards myth were, in the main, disparaging. Somewhat unwittingly, but importantly nonetheless, each view was implicated in the politico-philosophical projects of its proponents, insofar as the characterisation of some narratives as ‘myths’ (with the implicit charge of falsity) involved a move to assert the primacy of the proponents’ own truth—discursive authority—against those traditions and systems they considered erroneous. Of the three types of attitude towards myth, the deist and rationalist views had the most enduring influence on the development of the field of mythology: deist attitudes informed and guided the romantic view of myth while the rationalist view provided the intellectual foundation for the nineteenth-century mythology of scholars like Edward Tylor (1832–1917), Andrew Lang (1844–1912), and Sir James Frazer (1854–1941). The Enlightenment, for all its distrust of myth and mythmaking, thus saw a resurgence of interest in the study of myth, partially due to the availability of new data on the traditions and beliefs of non-European people, provided by missionaries, travellers, and merchants, as European societies embarked on a programme of rapid colonial expansion.

(iv) Orienting Knowledges: Spatial Politics, Temporal Contexts

The idea of progress and civilisation, the promotion of the rhythmic model of history, and the rejection of myth as evidence of the superstition and erroneous thinking that was the domain of the ignorant and primitive, neatly provided the ideological justification—the condition of possibility—for imperialist ambitions (or what became designated as the ‘civilising mission’). It was an idea which gathered pace in the following centuries until it obscured almost entirely the economic motives that provoked European colonial expansion. It enabled the elaboration of a discourse which privileged an élitist European subjectivity and produced a new formulation (with spatial and temporal significance)²⁰ of abject Otherness, seen to be embodied both by the

²⁰ Thomas Docherty points to the spatial and temporal opposition between the European centre and the colonised periphery that was established in Enlightenment thought and argues that it enabled the power relations of colonialism: ‘When the north-western tip of Europe designated itself as the centre of “Enlightenment” in the eighteenth century, it did so in the secure knowledge that an “unenlightened periphery” was thereby constructed; and the imperialist expansion that went hand in hand with the development of Enlightenment philosophy was not just a mercantile affair, for it also had a series of conceptual components. To be “enlightened”, by definition, is implicitly to construct the idea of oneself as a Subject-in-time; one has a present, characterised by light, which is distinguished from something dark which is necessarily prior to the moment of enlightenment. A specific model of historical narrative is thereby put in place’ (1993:445). He further argues that ‘[t]he politics of imperialism and colonialism [are]...founded not just upon geography but also upon a series of temporal factors, and most significantly upon a question of

colonised peoples—evinced by the relative ease with which they were colonised—and by those Europeans who were considered to be mired in the superstitions promulgated by the Christian Church. This was thus a dualistic framework which mirrored and confirmed the Cartesian view of humanity as separate from, and transcendent to, the natural world.

The impact of such a bifurcated presentation of subjectivity, as Edward Said (1978) so famously argued, produced a self-sustaining narrative of Otherness upon which a colonial knowledge/power nexus was established in the eighteenth century, and then more finely tuned during the nineteenth century. The image of the ‘savage’ native as primitive other, opposed to the ‘civilised’ European, was a significant part of a complex system of narrative representations—of mythmaking—that was, as Russell McCutcheon argues, ‘taken as normative and authoritative by a community of readers and writers’ (1997:188). It also provided a material referent for European knowledge production, one that literally ‘authorised’ (made into authors) the colonisers who were cast as knowing subjects, while the colonised, as well as those within European societies who remained, in the view of the *philosophes*, stubbornly ignorant of the insights of rational philosophy, or who continued to be beguiled by superstition, religion, or myth, were rendered as the objects of knowledge in a way that ignored or repressed their own agentive identity. The knowledge production and epistemological models of Enlightenment *philosophes* and nineteenth-century European colonisers thus imposed a discursive and rhetorical homogeneity that, while it bore a passing resemblance to particular indigenous accounts (for example, those of a small native élite who were often complicit in colonial administrative and educational projects), marginalised and denounced altogether subaltern narratives. Knowledge of the savage native was effectively repackaged and re-presented, through a complex educational, legal, and political network, as knowledge for the native that would enable the progress of all humanity towards the European model of civilisation.

Enlightenment knowledge production placed manifold local narratives (simultaneously inscribing them as inferior) in the singular context of ‘World History’ that served, in retrospect, both to confirm and to narrate the Enlightenment version of history as one of newly inevitable and irresistible progress.²¹ Temporality in this mode was reconfigured as naturally sequential and inexorable, a movement—albeit initially

“speed”: the coloniser posits herself or himself as “advanced”—in advance of a colonised, who is thereby stigmatised as “tardy” or “underdeveloped” (*ibid.*).

²¹ See Stocking 1987:8–45.

oscillating—from a primitive origin in antiquity to the civilised and civilising present. As such, it was a selectively optimistic view of human history which was now seen as a move towards a condition of inevitable perfectibility. A logical corollary of this rationalist conception of history was the tendency of Enlightenment thinkers to demean or deride those cultures and peoples, past and present, which lacked consciousness of the principles of enlightened reason and who persisted in slavish adherence to superstition, myth, and religion. Such cultures tended to be seen as lower stages in the development of cosmopolitan rationality. Hence, in the view of Condorcet, it was the good fortune of the ‘barbarous, unenlightened cultures’ of his day that they could now acquire the rational principles of Enlightenment directly from the enlightened culture of European society (1955:178).

The past and present of colonised people, and of the lower classes, provided both an evidential and an ontological platform—or *origin*—from which to make manifest the progression of European intellectual development from a state of primitivity to one of refined and rationalist superiority. Further, it fuelled an enthusiasm for the frenzied knowledge-gathering, the complex production of taxonomies and philologies, that became so characteristic of European Orientalist scholarship in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the extent that indigenous knowledge was also effectively colonised in the service of the European narrative of progress. However, there was a parallel strand of thought—romanticism—that emerged in the eighteenth century and which took a nostalgic attitude to the past, sentimentalising it in terms of a lost paradise that could only be salvaged through careful attention to the very peripheral narratives that were, with alarming speed, being closed down. I want to turn, therefore, to examine the retrieval of the past in the context of the romantic movement in order to provide the historical background to the transfiguration of the past into a myth of origins that occurred within German romantic nationalism, a process explored in detail throughout the remainder of the thesis.

II. Romancing the Origin in the Politics of Nostalgia²²

In this section I present a broad overview of the romantic movement in terms of a complex network of cultural undercurrents and aesthetic articulations during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which were distinct from the parallel strand of scientific and modern industrialisation that produced rationalism. Broadly speaking, romanticism was an intellectual movement that flourished in Europe between the middle of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with its ideological roots found in the work of the pre-romantic thinkers Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) and Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803). It is generally agreed that the romantic movement arose as an antithesis to the ideals of the Enlightenment in that it posed a conscious challenge to the aesthetic and philosophical priorities of the Age of Reason. To some extent, romanticism was a counterpoint rearticulation of Enlightenment values, in radically different language and to different ends, particularly as far as it valorised, through narrative forms, the identity formulations peculiar to the Enlightenment, and, even more crucially, with respect to the dependence of these formulations on mythical sites of origin. It is perhaps clearer, therefore, if both romanticism and rationalism are seen as the Janus-faced expressions of the Enlightenment epistemological and ontological paradigm. Romanticism can be understood as an introverted and nostalgic gaze towards the past in search of authentic selfhood, and rationalism as an extroverted affirmation of universal individualism, looking towards the future of progress and derogating the past which served merely as a point of departure. While both conceived of subjectivity in dramatically divergent ways, they were, nonetheless, concerned with the location of origins for the legitimization of their theories of identity, whether cosmopolitan,

²² The phrase ‘politics of nostalgia’ was coined by Armin W. Geertz and Jeppe Sinding Jensen to critique Mircea Eliade’s tendency (along with other historians of religion) to isolate and celebrate an unchanging and unique core to all religious forms, that is, religion as *sui generis*. For Geertz and Jensen, the phrase ‘politics of nostalgia’ refers to a deliberate and sentimental turn to the past ‘which seeks, on the basis of a universalist interpretation of religions, to restore Man as a complete and inherently spiritual being’ (1991:13). That this is a fundamentally political act is explored more fully in Chapters 5 and 6. In the context of the discussion of romanticism presented here, I am using the term ‘politics of nostalgia’ to refer to the way in which the romantic derogation of the present to the redemptive qualities of the archaic past took place against a backdrop of immense social upheaval and the breakdown of traditional hierarchies and in so doing reflected a politically-informed concern to restore social order by returning to the ‘old ways’. Romanticism thus ascribed a value and authority to its conceptions of the past in which, for example, the more inequitable qualities of social hierarchy and power were downplayed, in order to shape and judge the present. As Russell McCutcheon has noted, ‘The politics of nostalgia...denotes an ideological position in which, for example, things purportedly archaic are unilaterally prevalued as essential and beneficial, becoming the norm against which other social arrangements and forms or human behaviour are judged and found wanting (1997:33–34).

universalist, progressive and individualist (in the case of rationalism) or national, heterogeneous (in terms of differences between nations), retrogressive, and communitarian (in the case of romanticism). However, although both affirmed the autonomy of the individual, where Enlightenment thinkers assumed the essential unity of human consciousness, romantic thinkers generally promoted the uniqueness of each individual as it was constituted by life experience, an important dimension of which was thought frequently to be national character, and proposed a more synthetic notion of unity, that of the individual with the community, the community with the nation, and the nation with other nations.

For romantic thinkers, it was not reason but rather inner feelings, imagination, and the unbounded spirit that could intuit the truth of the human condition. Emotional and aesthetic expression was understood to be the primal motivation of human beings and was therefore not to be repressed by reason. Subjectivity was understood to reside in, and to be defined with reference to, an individual's place within a community of origin. Whereas in the rationalist paradigm the subject was conceived of as relentlessly atomistic, the romantic recovery of vernacular traditions promoted relational identity. This should not be mistaken, however, as a benign view of communitarian identity: the value assigned to indigenous communities relied on the identification and exclusion of others who were defined in terms of their foreignness and seen to pose a threat to the unity and purity of the affinal group.

The past few decades have seen a great deal of debate concerning definitions of romanticism, with very little consensus having been achieved regarding its core philosophies, periodisation, or even geographical location. It is not my concern here to revisit in any detail the main arguments in the debate, largely because they are primarily relevant to studies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English literature and not to the broader ideological movement that is the focus of discussion in this chapter.²³ Rather, of more immediate interest for my purpose is the romantic movement's

²³ See Ferguson 1991 and McGann 1992. The debate has focused on René Wellek's suggestion (1949; 1963) that romanticism was a cohesive philosophical and aesthetic phenomenon. Jerome McGann (1983; 1992:735–739), following Arthur Lovejoy (1916; 1917; 1941), argues instead that romanticism was much more fragmented. He suggests that the term 'Romantic Period' (1992:740) be used to describe late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century writings, making 'romanticism' an historical—rather than aesthetic or philosophical—category (since many romantic-era authors did not subscribe to the romantic ideals as defined by Wellek). It is possible, in my view, however, to identify a number of common philosophical and aesthetic *preoccupations* under the broad rubric of romanticism as a *movement*, particularly as these are distinct from, and sometimes antithetical to, the contemporaneous discourse of rationalism. This is especially the case in the context of German romanticism which will be discussed more fully in Chapters 4–6.

idealisation of the past and nature (in particular, the rural landscape), its fascination with pagan religiosity (understood here as pre-Christian as well as non-European, and resolutely antipathetical towards the mythologies of Greek and Rome), and its search for vernacular forms of sociality (myths, customs, and languages) that could provide a cohesive foundation for social and national unity.²⁴ These core features should be viewed, I will argue below, in terms of an implicit, although occasionally explicit, agenda concerned with the redemptive power of origins and the past for retrieving authentic expressions of national and individual identity. My intention here is to survey these features of romanticism, particularly as they relate directly to the discussion of myth, race, and German nationalism in the following chapters. In the sections below, I will deal with two preoccupations of romantic thought, namely, the idealisation of the rural landscape and the rediscovery of vernacular traditions.²⁵

(i) The Rural Idyll

The idealisation of the rural landscape (and its inhabitants) was prompted in large part by hostility to the mass industrialisation of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and provided a stark contrast to the progressive vision of civilisation that had led to technological advancements in the areas of manufacturing, communication, and transport. In England according to Hutton, ‘the shift of emotion involved can be attributed to a single and simple process; that in 1810 about 80 percent of English people lived in the countryside, and by 1910 about 80 percent lived in towns’ (Hutton 1999:117). Similarly, Boa and Palfreyman draw attention to a slightly later development in Germany when they note that in the period from 1840 to 1900 the population moved from being primarily rural to predominantly urban (2000:1). Suddenly the urban centres that had earlier promised progress and emancipation had turned into chaotic, alienating conglomerations, spreading pollution, disease, and social instability. In contrast to cities, the shrinking and depopulated countryside was depicted as an idyll of continuity and social unity, where age-old feudalism was seen to be undisturbed by Enlightenment calls for liberty.

²⁴ Hutton differs in that he singles out the fusion of three significant forces as productive of romanticism: in the context of the British movement ‘admiration for ancient Greece, nostalgia for a vanished past, and desire for an organic unity between people, culture, and nature’ (1999:21). German romanticism, in contrast, took a much more ambivalent attitude towards ancient Greece as I will show.

²⁵ For further discussion of pagan religiosity during the period, see Hutton’s fine survey (1999, especially pp. 32–51) which examines the growth of British paganism from the late seventeenth century onwards.

Jackson Lears describes, for example, a 'feeling of over-civilization' which, in the nineteenth century, expanded into 'a sign of a broad...dissatisfaction with modern culture'. He notes that, 'haltingly, half-consciously, Europeans and Americans alike began to recognize that the triumph of modern culture had not produced greater autonomy,' but on the contrary had highlighted 'a spreading sense of moral impotence and spiritual sterility—a feeling that life had become not only overcivilized but also curiously unreal' (1981:4–5). The psychological impact of this rapid shift cannot be overestimated and is evident in the increasing nostalgia for, and sentimentalisation of, the rustic behaviours and practices of the peasantry, viewed through much of the scholarship, literature, art and music of the romantic period. Benedict Anderson (1991), understands this constructive nostalgia for a vanishing past to be a response to 'characteristic amnesias' brought about by 'profound changes in consciousness': 'Awareness of being imbedded in secular, serial time, with all its implications of continuity, yet of "forgetting" the experience of this continuity...engenders the need for a narrative of "identity"' (1991:204–205).

Scholars and aesthetes, emulating the aristocratic landowners of the seventeenth century, tended to view the countryside as a timeless place in which archaic practices were continued with a childlike, but nonetheless dogged, sense of tradition. It was credited with all the advantages of simplicity and homeliness which were lacking in the modern towns and cities, considered not only more beautiful and wholesome, but also more stable, rooted, and enduring. Its inhabitants were endowed with an unassuming bucolic wisdom, attributed to their close contact with nature and an arcane knowledge of the land that had been preserved and handed down through countless generations. Their organic, timeless way of life was viewed both as a reassuring bulwark against the rapid and unsettling changes of the period, and as a potential ground from which indigenous cultures and values could be resuscitated to challenge those universalising forces of cosmopolitanism which threatened their destruction. This romanticisation of the countryside was remarkable as 'hitherto rustics had usually been portrayed by leaders of literary taste as the principal reservoir of ignorance, blind superstition, brutal manners, and political reaction, within which towns formed islands of liberalism, education, progress, and refinement' (Hutton 1999:117).

The romantic espousal of the common 'folk' was thus intended in part as a challenge against the ambivalent but nonetheless mainly critical attitude of the *philosophes*. As Robert Payne suggests, 'a measure of fear for the future of Enlightenment

in the face of both the abysmal ignorance seen lurking in the lower orders and the violent passions which those masses came to represent in the social order' informed the *philosophes* attitudes to the peasantry (1976:26). Although they sought to improve the miserable conditions in which the people lived, their condemnation of the superstitious nature of popular culture and traditions was a combination of an implicit alignment with aristocratic standards of gentility and the preoccupations of a bourgeois, utilitarian concern for increasing productivity and the self-discipline that it required (1976:117–124).

The rapid migration of the rural population to metropolitan centres had originally started in the seventeenth century. This was the result, at least in Britain, of official enclosure policies that took land out of active agricultural production and turned it into parklands and new woods, a novel use of the rural landscape that was prompted by the new gentry's penchant for establishing country seats and rural retreats. As Abrahams points out, 'there are manifest ironies involved in this process of sentimentalizing a way of life only after those who once practised it have been taken from the land' (1993:4).²⁶ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, countryside landholdings remained a powerful signal of wealth and status for the new capitalists, and some of the behaviours and practices of the peasants were still viewed as the authentic and unsullied voice of the people. Now, however, the peasants were renamed 'folk' and given a different place in the symbolic economy by which society was constituted and conceived.²⁷ Under the aristocratic *ancien régime*, peasants had been idealised as gentle—if superstitious and simple—and their customs, tales, and songs were understood to embody 'native wisdom'. However, following, for example, the French Revolution of 1789, they were now regarded as embodiments of popular sentiment and practice, purveyors of common sense, even carriers of local and national character, and most importantly, as symbols of the natural liberty of humankind. As long as those who represented the rising commercial sector of urban life could continue to imagine returning to the country and adopting country ways, they could ignore the negative features of social stratification and enclosure, and of industrialisation and imperialism. Related to this shift in perception was the fact that scientific discoveries during the Enlightenment (and the Industrial Revolution which followed throughout

²⁶ See also Lunn 1986:483.

²⁷ This redesignation was related, as Abrahams notes, to the attempt by bourgeois antiquarians to improve their status as men of letters. The field of 'folkloristics' was inaugurated as a result (1993:9).

Europe), had also led to the emergence of new social classes, particularly that of an urbanised *bourgeoisie* and working class. It appears most likely, therefore, that a class struggle was involved, especially when the attitudes to the countryside during the previous century are compared to those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Under conditions that called for revitalisation, the countryside was available to provide a perspective from which to recognise and expunge the contaminations of over-civilisation. Furthermore, the romantics who advocated this view, in seeking out and nurturing the indigenous folk traditions of the countryside, actively formulated a challenge to the rationalist perspective of modernisation by opposing nature to culture, instincts to logic, and the archaic to the novel.

The rural idealism of the romantic era was allied to the reconceptualisation of the past as a site of authentic origin (Abrahams 1993:19), at once more organic, more local, and more legitimating of nationalist, regional, and aesthetic agendas than the cosmopolitan view of the past. In this view the origin was a non-transcendable point, and thus seriously at odds with the Enlightenment view of the past. The past so conceived, particularly in Germany, was a very particular vision, one which was indebted both to a form of reconceived feudal medievalism and to an assumed autochthony, presumed to have enabled a profound connection of people with the land. It carried undertones of a past characterised by nobility, chivalry and a presumed 'natural' hierarchy that ensured social harmony.²⁸ Envisioning the past in this way thus usefully coincided with the articulation of nationalist discourses, grounded, as they now could be, in claims regarding the primordial rootedness of the folk in the land which they inhabited.

This nostalgic imagination of the past was almost entirely fictional—what Hobsbawm and Ranger call the 'invention of tradition' (1983)²⁹—and resonant initially only for the emergent educated bourgeoisie which was then urgently seeking an alternative model of history that could reply to the evident failure of the emancipatory doctrines of the Enlightenment. The solution to the social instability created by the political and cultural revolutions of the eighteenth century was seen to lie in the creation of a national cultural identity based on the revival of ancient vernacular traditions and

²⁸ See the quotation from Novalis' *Die Christenheit oder Europa* ('Christendom or Europe, 1799, first published in 1826) in Tully 1997:10, fn. 19 which stands as a clear example of this idealisation of medieval feudal society.

²⁹ Hobsbawm, in particular, argues that the 'invention of traditions' signals the decline or absence of those very traditions: 'Where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented' (1983:8).

practices, and the hierarchical social structures of feudalism. The emphasis on tradition, custom, and community evolved into a specific set of values that were productive of the socio-political theories of ethnic organicism which I will examine in the context of *Völkisch* idealism in more detail in Chapter 5. In the next section I will look more closely at some of the reasons for the revival of vernacular forms as found more broadly within the romantic paradigm.

(ii) The Rediscovery of Vernacular Traditions: Redeeming the Present

Confronted by the cosmopolitan assimilation of distinct ethnic entities by dominant cultures, (for example, in the context of the military aggression of Napoleonic France), the articulation and preservation of unique and authentic national identities required an urgent effort to define what was original and distinctive in a given culture's history, practices, and cultural forms. As Anthony D. Smith rightly notes, the imagination of the past as a kind of 'golden age' became a standard 'against which to measure the alleged failings of the present generation and contemporary community' (1996:450). Philologists, historians, and folklorists began to search the documentary and material records of indigenous peasant communities in order to reconstruct a picture of native life in earlier times, from which the present-day community could derive a sense of continuity and, most importantly, dignity. In doing so they drew up the boundaries of a community on the basis of shared codes, often a vernacular language, or body of stories, to produce a strong sense of cultural identity and difference. Orvar Löfgren, describing the construction of national identities, outlines an inventory of the common building blocks of nationhood, particularly as they were formulated in the late eighteenth century:

The experiences and strategies of creating national languages, heritages and symbolic estates, etc., are circulated among intellectual activists in different corners of the world and the eventual result is a kind of check-list: every nation should have not only a common language, a common past and destiny, but also a national folk culture, a national character or mentality, national values, perhaps even some national tastes and a national landscape...a gallery of national myths and heroes (and villains), a set of symbols, including flag and anthem, sacred texts and images, etc.

(1989:8–9)

Such inventorisation served to define the differences between nations in terms of their variegated indigenous cultural productions, but, paradoxically, their legitimacy relied on fulfilment of homogenous criteria. I will return in Chapter 4 to examine the scholarly literature on nationalism; here it should be noted that Löfgren is advocating a model of 'cultural nationalism', very different from the view that sees nations as 'civic' formations

where the political state grants membership in the nation through the extension of rights and duties to its citizens.

The preoccupation, in the romantic paradigm, with indigenous traditions, myths, and cultural forms was thus a product of the view that language and literature were key resources for the (re)construction of distinct and authentic national identities. Ancient literature, folklore, myths, and customs were looked to as the basis for cultural unity in the present and for the realisation of political unity in the future. New traditions were thus effectively invented by intellectuals and scholars, who, by consolidating and developing those already extant traditions which emphasised community, morality, and hierarchy, presented a chiliastic view of the past that was positive and unifying but essentially imaginative. Their aims during the romantic period, particularly those of folklorists and antiquarians,³⁰ are well summarised by Hobsbawm's three categories of 'systems of social management' wherein traditions are invented in order to 'establish continuity with a suitable historic past' (1983:1–14):

(a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, (b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and (c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, values systems and conventions of behaviour.

(1983:9)

Myths in particular, in this context, offered a repertoire of imaginative vocabularies that contained all the necessary ingredients for illuminating authentic national character, offering both examples of heroic behaviour and concrete visions of an edifying and more glorious past that were retrieved and retold with the didactic purpose of promoting national cohesion.³¹

Many of the nationalist mythologies that developed in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries related modern nations or people to ancient tribal origins, whether Celtic, Teutonic, Nordic, Gallic, or Gothic, for example. As Lincoln points out, it was in this period that myths were identified with 'specific, ethnically, linguistically defined populations' and that it thence became common 'to speak of "Greek myths," "Norse myths," "Navajo myths," and the like', an 'orientation

³⁰ See Hustvedt 1930:13.

³¹ Ironically, the romantic writers and collectors of folklore tended to adapt and rework the material they gathered amongst the 'folk' for the edification of their educated, urban middle-class audiences, and for the satisfaction of their 'desire to feel more natural and instinctive' (Lunn 1986:484) as I will discuss in Chapter 5. Nonetheless, the new romantic populism, in a way similar to the rationalist emancipatory agenda, represented a potential counterweight, within the European intellectual elite, to courtly definitions of culture, and had, beyond that, democratic implications.

[that] takes for granted that nations [and] “cultures”...are primordial, bounded, unproblematic entities and that myth is the equally primordial voice, essence and heritage of the group’ (1999:210).

It was the Swiss scholar Paul Henri Mallet (1730–1807), a professor of *Belles-Lettres* in Copenhagen, who initiated this new interest in vernacular myths and who helped to counter the widespread interest in Latin and Greek classical myth. In 1755 he published his *Introductions à l’histoire du Dannemarc où l’on traite de la religion, des loix des mœurs et des usages des anciens Danois*,³² followed in the following year by his *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poésie des Celtes, et particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves*.³³ It was this second book that brought the Nordic mythology of the *Eddas* to wider European attention. Mallet’s work, later expanded and re-edited (1809 and 1847), described Norse mythology and cosmogony, and offered a critical commentary on its origins and significance (Feldman and Richardson 1972:199–201).

Mallet considered this ‘northern’ mythology to be central in the development of modern Europe because, in his view, the arrival in Europe of the northernmost peoples had been a determining factor in the historical formation of its cultures and societies. As Robert Richardson notes, for Mallet, ‘to know modern Europe...one needed to study, not the Greeks and Romans, but the Northmen, who were the source of European liberty and much else besides’ (in Feldman and Richardson 1972:200). Nonetheless, Mallet was fairly disparaging of Nordic traditions, suggesting that while the early Nordic religion had been in many ways similar to a prototypical form of Christianity or the deist vision of natural religion—pure, dignified, imaginative, and humane—and had celebrated the brave nobility of warriors and honour amongst men and treated women with respect, by the time of the writing of the *Eddas* it had been corrupted by an aggressive and macabre form of religiosity, most evident in the militant barbarism of Odin and the wolf Fenrir and in the frequent and bloody apocalyptic reveries of the myths’ narrators. This later religion had created a violent mythology that in turn could produce only more barbarism. However, as Feldman and Richardson suggest, ‘for all his disapproval of Nordic myth, Mallet took great care to present the stories themselves completely and colourfully; it was to prove easy for Mallet’s readers to pick up the myths and disregard Mallet’s own glum estimate of their potential’ (*ibid.*).

³² ‘Introduction to the History of Denmark or On the Character of the Religion, [the] Laws, Manners and Customs of the Ancient Danes’.

³³ ‘Monuments of the Mythology and the Poetry of the Celts, and in particular the ancient Scandinavians’.

Mallet's influence was immediate and widespread as historians, theologians, philosophers, mythographers and poets became acquainted with his work. It was translated into Danish, German, and English in 1770 (as *Northern Antiquities* by Bishop Thomas Percy [1729–1811]). In Germany it was enthusiastically received by Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788), Herder (who interpreted the Nordic myths—and in fact all myths—as popular peoples' poetry as I will show in the following chapter), and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), to name only a few. In England, Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) frequently cited Mallet in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (published posthumously in 1796) and Bishop Percy's *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* (1763) borrowed three of its five texts from Mallet. In France, Voltaire read Mallet, and a good deal of the new Nordic material was to be found in the later volumes of the *Encyclopédie* (c. 1772) (Feldman and Richardson 1972:200). It was common in the late eighteenth century to consider the Celtic, Gallic, Germanic, and Scandinavian peoples as sharing a common ancestry (the word Celt was used to refer to all of the Northern ethnic groups), and it is unsurprising that Germans, French, English, and Scandinavians were all interested in Mallets' material and had little difficulty in incorporating it into their individual nationalist programs.

The principal consequence of Mallet's work was the idea that Northern Europe had its own vernacular mythological tradition and therefore need no longer turn to Rome or Greece as its inspirational precursors. After the publication of Mallet's work, mythology was considered a serious and legitimate area of scholarly interest, and to have a great deal of utility for what were then embryonic nationalist movements (as I will show when I examine Jakob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* in Chapter 6). The Norse myths, in spite of Mallet's scorn, clearly nourished the popular imagination in that the tales could now be considered to be an authentic part of the people's own local and national history and this was, as Feldman and Richardson suggests, primarily because of a newly discovered sense of ancient indigeneity (1972:199–201).

The heroic histories, poetic legacies, and elevated mores of these Northern European ancestor peoples were enlisted not just in validation of modern claims to national status but also in debates over what the modern nation *should* be like. Such myths of origin provided the foundations for later nationalist historiographies, suggesting inspirational narratives that hinged on the conquest and dispossession, survival and, most importantly, revival of the original native people. These myths also promoted the basic notion of a historically transmitted common identity that

historiographies could refashion, whether or not they clung to a predominantly racial/ethnic understanding of national identity. Nineteenth-century nationalist scholarship thus located the essential strength of modern national cultures in the survivals of an aboriginal inheritance, whether linguistic and cultural (as in Germany, for example) or legal and constitutional (in England).

Ancient cultural traditions were thus revalorised as a way of confronting and discarding what were seen as the intervening forms that had emerged as a result of either Christendom or the Enlightenment. As Abrahams recognises,

This move to purify [was] complemented and complicated by the need to construct a figure who embodies the past in all its glory, a representative figure somehow left behind on the landscape in spite of more recent historical forces. Such a figure epitomizes the sad feelings that arise from the notion of lost lands and lost inheritances intrinsic to acts of displacement.

(1993:9)

Within the romantic paradigm in Germany, these 'representative figures' were both the primordial *Volk* ('people') and the hero Arminius (whose story I will tell in the following chapter). Viewed as naturally more cognisant of indigenous articulations of identity, these figures were the heroic agents of vernacular traditions, which, if tapped into, could provide a means of resistance to the 'intervening forms'. They also became the bearers of national renaissance and served, to 'generate moods of prophetic expectancy with a powerful bearing on contemporary politics' (Cubitt1998:9); that is, moods which endowed nation-building imperatives with a framework in which to imagine the future destiny of the unified nation.³⁴ It is here, then, that I move to examine the relationship between myth, nation, and identity, to tie context to content. In the following chapters I will analyse, within the context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany, the specific inscription of myths and mythmaking in a politics of identity that were built upon the legitimating function of a vernacular origin. I will be particularly concerned with the possibilities that such an origin created for the articulation of German identity as a myth in the form of a discourse of differentiation.

However, before moving on to discuss the antecedents of this discourse, let me summarise what I have so far presented regarding the two dominant understandings of

³⁴ There is also a class dimension to the articulation of the heroic folk as custodians of national authenticity, and it is here that some correlation with the egalitarian ideals of the Enlightenment can be discerned. In many ways the idea of an unsullied plebeian authenticity is a product of the intellectual *élite*; nonetheless, as Bruce King has argued, 'Nationalism is an urban movement which identifies with the rural areas.... Nationalism aims at...rejection of cosmopolitan upper classes, intellectuals and others likely to be influenced by foreign ideas' (1980:42). The *élites*, in singling out the rural masses as having a salvific role, placed themselves, unwittingly, in a precarious position.

myth that emerged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and which were consolidated in the nineteenth—in particular, regarding the interdependence of theories of myth and theories of individuality and identity. As I have shown, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the revival of intense and escalating interest in myth. This revival oscillated between two main attitudes, both of which were characterised by their concern with the function of origins as platforms from which to establish and legitimate divergent ontological positions. On the one hand, Enlightenment rationalism understood myths primarily as a product of erroneous worldviews or as corruptions of divinely ordained natural religion through clerical interference. This attitude both coincided with and was productive of philosophical speculations regarding the atomistic, rational individual as the arbiter of the ‘truth’, and colonial expansionist schemes that imposed a distinction between a superior European rationalism and the primitive, irrational worldviews of colonised people. Myths, if they were to be given any credence at all, were viewed as intentionally invented by the individual as an imaginative act, a point of view similar to that of Plato. Furthermore, this attitude inscribed a view of the past that made clear its own distance and progress. Myths were the residual evidence of a primitive past that had to be discarded. As such, they enabled the assertion of an origin that served as a point of departure for the progressive schemes of rational emancipation and scientific advancement. It is this viewpoint that characterises popular understandings of myth today, and the history of this viewpoint has tended to dominate mythologists’ self-understandings of their scholarship, as discussed in the Introduction.

In contrast, the romantic paradigm granted myth a privileged status wherein a connection between nature and the subjective individual was believed to be visibly and actively preserved and therefore retrievable. In the context of increasing mass industrialisation and the material loss of large swathes of the countryside, such a recuperative project was deemed by many to be, at the very least, desirable. Against the Enlightenment paradigm, which saws myths as a point of departure, the romantics saw them as a point of return. The authentic, noble, and natural virtues communicated in myths, and believed to have been preserved particularly amongst the folk, appeared to offer the emerging European middle classes compellingly wholesome examples of an alternative way of life and a means, therefore, of resisting the destructive effects of modern civilisation. In the romantic view then, the mythical past was viewed nostalgically as an improvement on the present, and functioned as a template for an

idealised vision of the future. Within romanticism myths were a product, not of individual imaginations, but of the collective efforts of closely-knit communities to articulate a sense of themselves as a group, and to preserve their ancient and noble traditions. As such, the romantic approach to myth differed from that of rationalism by stressing myths' unconscious, subjective qualities.

A further important difference was asserted by viewing the production of myth as an organic process rather than as deliberately contrived or fabricated. Such an attitude lent itself well to emergent nationalist discourses where collections of myths were matched to distinct peoples, providing an accessible index of their internal and external characteristics. In this way, myths were the carriers of the truth of native character and history and an internal embodiment of a kind of national *summum bonum*: uncontrived, original, natural, and authentic. Myths might not be 'true' in their details but they were certainly to be taken seriously as vehicles and guardians of national characteristics and history. Such an understanding of the symbiotic relationship between myth and the native collective provided a counterpoint to the Enlightenment articulation of individual identity as atomistic. Anticipating Nietzsche's aphorism that 'The Thou is older than the I' (*Das Du ist älter als das Ich*) (1993:84) in the romantic worldview, the human individual was placed in a complementary and interdependent relationship to community and to nature. The individual could only derive a sense of his or her authentic nature by resisting the 'intervening forms' of the Enlightenment and by reasserting a natural connectedness to the land and community as found in vernacular narrative traditions. The romantic valorisation of myth thus entailed a consequent valorisation—and mythologisation—of national cultures, particularly insofar as myths were considered to reveal a providential and divine order as the internal teleology of history. This was in contrast to the rationalist emphasis on the human agent's instrumental role in the achievement of progress. In fact, from the eighteenth century onwards, the dialectical relationship between providence and progress constituted a definitive chiasmus upon which the field of mythology was founded and from which theories of myths' functions and meanings were consequently derived, promoted, and contested.

Romantic mythology was a post-Enlightenment response to rapid social change and political upheaval, and it used myths to retreat from the chaotic and overwhelming contemporary world into a sentimental, romanticised, and idealised past. One of the clearest examples of this tendency is found in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-

century Germany, where myth theorists, beginning with Johann Gottfried Herder, set the stage for the recovery of a myth of the autochthonous, pure German *Volk*, one that was to prove decisive in the struggle to assert a distinct German identity. It is to a discussion of this use of myth that I will now turn.

CHAPTER TWO

THE QUEST FOR GERMAN IDENTITY: TACITUS, THE GERMAN HUMANISTS, AND HERDER

In the previous chapter I examined the broad intellectual and ideological contexts in which ‘myth’ was reactivated as a category for investigating human development and identity and for establishing human autonomy or a basis for national collectivity in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. The aim of the following chapters is to build on that contextualisation in order to investigate the content—that is, the meaning, status, and function—of myths of origin in the narration and authorisation of identities. These chapters are thus concerned with analysing a significant and yet understudied ‘moment’ of mythmaking and mythology within the romantic paradigm when the status of myth was inscribed within the rubric of German identity politics, the result being the production of a ‘discourse of differentiation’ that proceeded from a nationalist search for origins. I thus consider the role of mythmaking in the reinvented traditionalism of German nationalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and in particular its nostalgic search for origins. In so doing I aim to build on the previous chapter’s survey of the romantic ideological paradigm in seeking to relate the emergence of ideas about, and uses of, myth within eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany to broader socio-political and intellectual struggles.

This chapter is divided into three main sections: the first two plot what amounted to a crisis of identity in Germany from the seventeenth century onwards as well as its earlier antecedents, in order to establish the specific context in which myths of origin for the German nation had a resonance and urgency that led towards an increasingly finely-tuned discourse of differentiation. Myth in this context employed images of differentiation and served a productive role in the legitimisation of identity by positing the incommensurability of people groups founded on an increasingly elaborate myth of origin. The third section examines the mobilisation of myth—and its connection to notions of national identity—in the work of the most influential German mythologist of the eighteenth century, Johann Gottfried von Herder. For Herder myths were an essential resource for rediscovering the unique traits of any given ethnic group, and his demotic theories of the *Volk* (‘the common people’) as revealed within vernacular

folklore were important for the formulation of the German nationalist projects of the following centuries.

I. Origin and Legitimacy: The Search for German Identity

The historical context and political conditions that framed a new interest in the origin and history of the German people were those where the unity of German culture and identity was threatened by a variety of interrelated factors, some of which have been touched on in the previous chapter. In 1766 the Imperial Privy Councillor Friedrich Carl von Moser (1701-1785) asked despairingly, 'What are the Germans?' His own bleak reply was:

What we are then, we have been for centuries; that is, a puzzle of a political constitution, a prey of our neighbours, an object of their scorn outstanding in the history of the world, disunited among ourselves, weak from our divisions, strong enough to harm ourselves, powerless to save ourselves, insensitive to the honour of our name, indifferent to the glory of our laws, envious of our rulers, distrusting one another, inconsistent about principles, coercive about enforcing them, a great but also a despised people, a potentially happy but actually a very lamentable people.

(in Schulze 1991:43)

The 'lamentable' status of the German people was in part the result of internal divisions within Germanic-speaking territories, reinforced by the two wars in Silesia (1740–1742 and 1744–1775) and the Seven Years War (1756–1763) where the imperial hegemony of Hapsburg Austria—firmly Catholic—was challenged by the anti-imperial, Protestant power in Prussia. The previously impoverished state of Brandenburg-Prussia had been transformed by King Frederick II (1712–1786), through a series of reforms, into a powerful modern state which contrasted favourably with those later attempted by the Austrian and Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II (1741–1790). The Holy Roman Empire, which had offered an ostensibly unifying political structure for the multitude of German regions, was, by the late-eighteenth century, hopelessly divided (Bendix 1978:379). Furthermore, regional divisions within the territories of Germany¹ meant that economic

¹ 'Germany' was not, of course, a fully realised nation state in the sense most commonly understood today—after all, German unification was only, at least initially, achieved through the efforts of Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898) in 1871. I am using the term 'Germany' as a matter of convenience, to indicate the collection of principalities that identified themselves explicitly as Germanic, either in terms of race, or of culture and language. It should be remembered, however, that even these means of measuring one's 'nationality' were thoroughly contested and ambiguous during this period, and it is one of the tasks of the following chapters to demonstrate the ways in which race, culture, and language were being furnished with specific hermeneutic significance as the search for German identity gathered momentum. Schulze argues that this search was largely a preoccupation of an emergent bourgeoisie, created as a result of the transition between the feudalism of *ancien régimes* and the emancipatory doctrines of the Enlightenment. However, even amongst this class any sense of 'Germanness' was vague, and this for Schulze is one of the

unity was virtually impossible, particularly as each territory imposed its own customs restrictions, monetary and measurement systems, and legislative frameworks. As a result, Germany was economically backward compared, for example, to France, England, and the Netherlands, all of which had relatively stable and unified political systems by the end of the eighteenth century. German disunity was further exacerbated by ideological tensions between regions, in many ways replicating the tensions between Protestant Prussia and Catholic Austria, caused, as Schulze remarks, by ‘the conflict between Reformation and Counter Reformation [which] had not been resolved in Germany, unlike most of the other European states, but had been petrified by the principle of “*cuius regio, eius religio*” (whose the region, his the religion)’² (1991:43).

The insecurity of any politically stable sense of German identity was also reinforced on the cultural front by Enlightenment cosmopolitanism which had led to a devaluing of national and ethnic traditions, literatures, and beliefs throughout Europe and by the promotion of French as a utilitarian *lingua franca* most suited to the application of reasoned thought and ideals of liberty. In addition, as Martin Thom argues, one of the discursive vehicles for German inferiority inscribed within Enlightenment reckonings was that the Germanic peoples were ‘marked negatively’ as the ‘ethnic edge to early cities’ (1995:203); that is, cities were prioritised as sites of cosmopolitan civilisation in contrast to a ‘memory’ of the threatening ‘tribal’ organisation of the ancient Germans. Here the strong subtext was the recollection of the Sack of Rome by the Goths in 410 CE, gloomily viewed by Renaissance humanists and Enlightenment *philosophes* as having inaugurated the Dark Ages.

Within the context of French ideological imperialism this idea was revived to assert a correspondence between the Roman Empire and France—and between Latin and French—as ‘bearer[s] of perfectibility’ and further, by reemploying the ancient Roman appellation of the Germans as barbarian tribes (Thom 2003:205). Such a parallel also recalled the necessity of guarding against the potential degeneration of civilised

explanations for why Germany never succumbed to the revolutionary impetus that transformed France: ‘The existing territorial state was seldom questioned by educated people; they felt, whether Prussians, Bavarians, Saxon-Goths, [etc.], thoroughly “Teutsch”....[W]hen they referred to such concepts as “nation”, “fatherland”, or “patriotism” they could be thinking of any sort of vaguely defined Germany as much as of the actual state in which they lived; they could also mean both of these at once’ (1991:47).

² The principle of *cuius regio eius religio* was juridically established at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, extended to include the Calvinists slightly later, and then reasserted at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. It proved to be a long-lived dictum, informing political and sectarian interactions in the German territories until the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1803.

mores within an expansive (French) empire should it fail to combat outside influences as Rome had. The French intellectual Antoine de Rivarol (1753–1801) could thus write, ‘Greece gave its laws to the barbarians who surrounded it; and Italy, which failed to follow its example and to constitute itself as a federal republic, was invaded in turn by the Germans, the Spanish and the French’ (in Thom 2003:189). Preserving French ideological hegemony—and thus heeding the failure of Rome to guard its empire against the barbarians—was seen to depend upon the promotion of the French language as a universally superior tool for communication across national boundaries, as it simultaneously enshrined Enlightenment values. As Rivarol announced, ‘The time would now seem to be ripe to speak of the *French world*, just as formerly one spoke of the *Roman world*’ (in Thom 1995:188). As a result, even French patois forms were treated as perversions of refined, city French, and were confined to rural provinces. German, as ‘at once too rich and too harsh, marred by its guttural pronunciation and its Gothic script’, was deemed by Rivarol to be ‘an unfit vehicle to serve as an instrument of universal communication between the peoples’ (in Thom 1995:189).

The promotion of French in this way and the designation of the German language as ‘barbaric’ were certainly felt within Germany. Thom observes, for example, that Frederick II had been ‘aggressively francophone’ in his promotion of French culture, despite attempts by Herder, the German poet Friedrich Gottfried Klopstock (1724–1803), Goethe, and the Duchess Anna Amalia (1739–1807) to promote German as the language of the Prussian court at Weimar (Thom 1995:190).³ In 1786 the French ambassador to the Prussian court, Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau (1749–1791), asked the King why he had become a German Caesar but never a German Augustus, and Frederick replied: ‘But what more could I have done for German culture than I did do, by having nothing to do with it?’ (in Schulze 1991:45).

The favour shown to French by the King contributed to the belief amongst the population in Germany that their own language, ‘then lacking a classical literature, was inferior to French’ (Thom 1995:188).⁴ Moreover, in an effort to implement the egalitarian vision of the Enlightenment, in 1774 Frederick II reformed the German political system, ostensibly empowering individuals through education and the centralisation of power away from local rulers, but in reality preserving the monarchical system that was then threatened by the spread of republicanism. This led, as Carol Tully suggests, to ‘a

³ See also Schulze 1991:44

⁴ This was not just a problem for Germans. See Thom 1995:187–201.

fundamental weakening of the essentially group-based feudalistic society which had existed since the Middle Ages' (1997:3). However, although many German (and other) intellectuals had been initially enthusiastic towards the fraternal and egalitarian ideals of the French Revolution, the Reign of Terror (1793–1794) that followed quickly disillusioned them; the original allure of the Enlightenment doctrine of individualism was now replaced by an acknowledgement of the horrifying consequences of jettisoning old values and authorities.⁵

In addition, however, to the immediate context of German social fragmentation and French ideological, political, and military imperialism, the status and identity of the German people had long been a source of debate and controversy, particularly when compared, as it frequently was, to those European societies that could more firmly locate their cultural pedigree in classical Greece and Rome.⁶ To understand better what amounted to a German identity crisis, therefore, I need to turn to a much earlier time.

II. The Ancient Origins of German Identity: Tacitus and the Germania

The story is a complex one, and begins with the discovery of two Latin texts, both written by the Roman historian Tacitus (c. 54–117 CE). The first was his ethnography of the German people, *De Origine et Situ Germanorum* ('On the Origin and Geography of Germany'; c. 98 CE), more commonly known as the *Germania* (henceforth Tac. *Ger*) and written during the second consulship of the Emperor Trajan. The second was his account, written approximately twenty years later, of the defeat of three Roman legions in 9 CE by the Germanic prince of the Cherusci tribe, Arminius, which was narrated in the first three books of the *Annals* (henceforth Tac. *Ann.*).⁷ Both texts became the founding documents of German nationalism from the Middle Ages onwards.

After the fall of the Roman Empire the *Germania* had been lost from view until its recovery c. 1456. Poggio Bracciolini, a Renaissance scholar with Florentine connections, was obsessed with finding the lost works of classical antiquity and he had learned of the existence of a number of minor writings by Tacitus held by the ancient imperial Benedictine monastery in Hersfeld (situated in the province of Hesse-Nassau,

⁵ Carol Tully (1997:4) suggests that it was disillusionment with the French Enlightenment that led to the rejection of Enlightenment certainties found, for example, in the reactionary work of Edmund Burke (1729–97), Louis de Bonald (1754–1840), and Joseph de Maistre (1754–1821).

⁶ See James 1989:19–30 for a discussion of the continuing idealisation of ancient Greek culture amongst some German intellectuals, particularly Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768), in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. See also Harold 1989:19–20.

⁷ The *Annals* as a whole provides an account of the history of Rome from the death of Augustus in 14 CE to the end of the rule of the Emperor Domitian in 96 CE.

Prussia). In 1427, he attempted unsuccessfully, along with a number of other competing manuscript hunters, to persuade the monks in Hersfeld to sell them to him. Some years later, in 1451, Enoch of Ascoli (c. 1400–1457) was commissioned by Pope Nicholas V (1397–1455) to acquire the manuscripts. His first attempt was also unsuccessful but a return trip to Hersfeld in 1456 saw him in possession of the manuscripts, the rumour being that he had acquired them through devious means. He returned to Italy with the *Agricola*, the *Germania*, and the *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, to find that Nicholas V had died and, when Enoch himself died in the following year, the manuscripts passed into the custody of Stefano de Nardini of Ancona (n.d.). Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1405–1464), who was later to become Pope Pius II, purchased them from Nardini and it was through him that the *Germania* first came to the attention of the German people. (See Schellhase 1976—especially Chapters 2 and 3—and Mendell 1935 for a fuller account of the recovery of the manuscripts.)

The *Germania* must have seemed to Piccolomini to be a timely acquisition indeed. Martin Mair, the Chancellor to the Archbishop of Mainz (n.d.), had written a strident letter to Piccolomini in 1457, detailing German grievances against the papacy. These consisted of the ‘constant stream of taxes, offerings, fees and annates’ that were demanded of Germany by the Holy See (Thoms 1995:215; Holborn 1935:5–6), as well as the ruthless simony of papal benefices, a decline in the quality of priests and bishops (who were accused of acting like secular lords rather than servants of the Church), the widespread abuse of indulgences, and the summary transfer of legal cases beyond their proper German courts to Rome (thus bypassing the normal judiciary proceedings of the Holy Roman Empire). Piccolomini was well positioned to reply to these complaints, familiar as he was with early German history, and due to his earlier involvement in disputes between the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy (Thoms 1995:214–215). In his response to Mair (*De Ritu, Situ, Moribus et Condicione Germaniae Descriptio*; 1458), Piccolomini drew heavily—but selectively—on *Germania* XVI–XXVI to argue that, according to Tacitus, the German tribes had been a primitive, uncultured, and barbaric people. He thus unfavourably compared the condition of the Germans as described by Tacitus, to the prosperous state of fifteenth-century Germany’s cities, arguing that the Germans demonstrably owed their prosperity to the ecclesiastical interventions of Rome (Thoms 1995:215).

What Piccolomini could not have anticipated was the German response to these excerpts of the *Germania*. Despite Piccolomini’s forceful refutation of German autonomy,

resistance to the Papacy increased⁸ and the *Germania* subsequently became more widely known.⁹ It became the first of Tacitus' works to be printed (Schama 2004:77). The *Germania* taken as a whole painted a more complimentary picture of the ancient Germans than Piccolomini's selective reading would have it. For example, despite his criticisms of the German tribes' crude agricultural practices, disordered settlements, and brawling and drunkenness (Chapters XXI to XXIII), Tacitus also praised their bravery, generous hospitality, physical strength, social institutions, and lack of interest in money or precious metals. It was two of Tacitus' observations in particular, however, found in Chapters II and IV, that fuelled what Thom refers to as 'the cult of primitive Germanic virtue' (1995:214). Chapter II begins: 'As to the Germans themselves, I think it probable that they are indigenous and that very little foreign blood has been introduced either by invasions or by friendly dealings with neighbouring peoples' (Tac. *Ger.* II.1). Tacitus continues this theme in Chapter VI when he states that

For myself, I accept the view that the peoples of Germany have never contaminated themselves by intermarriage with foreigners but remain of pure blood, distinct and unlike any other nation. One result of this is that their physical characteristics, in so far as one can generalize about such a large population, are always the same: fierce-looking blue eyes, reddish hair, and big frames—which, however, can exert strength only by means of violent effort.

(Tac. *Ger.* IV.1–2)

It was primarily on the basis of these two chapters that the *Germania* was hailed as evidence for the ancient autochthony, as well as the primitive nobility, of the German people, a claim that was to reverberate with sinister effect in the twentieth century.

The first three books of the *Annals* narrate the attempt by the Roman emperors Augustus (c. 27 BCE–14 CE) and Tiberias (14–37 CE) to subdue the German tribes. Tacitus

⁸ Martin Luther's (1483–1546) polemic against papal abuses and the sale of 'indulgences' by church officials (the Ninety-Five Theses nailed to the door of the Schlosskirche in Wittenberg, 1517) stands as an exemplar of a nascent German resistance to the hegemony of the Roman papacy during this period and indicates that Mair's earlier complaints still rankled with the Germans over half a century later. Although Luther's intervention was couched in terms that seemed to argue for a return to the basic principles of the gospel that had been corrupted by ecclesiastical excesses, it was also arguably an attempt to assert the superiority and nobility of indigenous German values. He contrasted, for example, the papacy (and the pope, whom he equated with the Anti-Christ) with the German nation 'the constancy, loyalty and noble nature of which is praised by all historians' (in Poliakov 1974:82–83), a statement which seems to be an oblique reference to the *Germania*. Martin Luther is also believed to have been the first to change the hero Arminius' name, whose exploits against the Romans I will review shortly, into the German name Hermann (the name 'Arminius' is a Latinised variant of the German name Armin or Hermann which is roughly equivalent to 'warrior' or 'soldier'). See Benario 2004:87; Schellhase 1976:47; Schama 2004:95.

⁹ Stefano de Nardini had kept a version of the *Germania* copied in his own hand and arranged, in 1470, for the *Germania* to be published in Venice. Three years later it was published in Nuremberg, and the first (German) vernacular translation was published in Leipzig in 1496.

takes up the tale where the Roman historian Velleius Paterculus (c. 19 BCE–30 CE)¹⁰ left off—the spectacular defeat at the Teutoburger Wald¹¹ in 9 CE of the Roman governor of Germania, Publius Quintilius Varus (n.d), by the Cheruscan prince Arminius (c.18 BCE–21 CE)—and describes the eventually successful attempt by Germanicus, the grandson of Augustus and the nephew of Tiberius, to restore the honour of Rome by defeating the Cherusicans. In order to contextualise Tacitus’ account, it is necessary briefly to review Paterculus’ chronicle of the Roman defeat.

By 9 CE the Romans had built a series of fortifications on the Danube, the Rhine, the Elbe, and the Weser. Tiberius Nero (the successor to Augustus) had twice attempted to gain control of the interior of Germania (Vell. Pat. ii.105–109) and on the Emperor Augustus’ instructions had appointed Quintilius Varus governor of the dominion, providing him with three legions in order to complete the acquisition of the territory and transform it into a Roman province. However, according to Paterculus, Varus was ill-suited to the task:

Varus Quintilius, descended from a famous rather than a high-born family, was a man of mild character and of a quiet disposition, somewhat slow in mind as he was in body, and more accustomed to the leisure of the camp than to actual service in war. That he was no despiser of money is demonstrated by his governorship of Syria: he entered the rich province a poor man, but left it a rich man and the province poor. When placed in charge of the army in Germany, he entertained the notion that the Germans were a people who were men only in limbs and voice, and that they, who could not be subdued by the sword, could be soothed by the law. With this purpose in mind he entered the heart of Germany as though he were going among a people enjoying the blessings of peace, and sitting on his tribunal he wasted the time of a summer campaign in holding court and observing the proper details of legal procedure.

But the Germans, who with their great ferocity combine great craft, to an extent scarcely credible to one who has had no experience with them, and are a race to lying born, by trumping up a series of fictitious lawsuits, now provoking one another to disputes, and now expressing their gratitude that Roman justice was settling these disputes, that their own barbarous nature was being softened down by this new and hitherto unknown method, and that quarrels which were usually settled by arms were now being ended by law, brought Quintilius to such a complete degree of negligence, that he came to look upon himself as a city praetor

¹⁰ Velleius Paterculus, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, Book II, Chpts. 117–125, henceforth cited as Vell. Pat.

¹¹ The Teutoburger Wald is located to the north of the central European uplands, extending eastward toward the Weser river, southward from the town of Osnabrück and southeastwards to Paderborn (Schama 2004:88). Pliny the Elder (23–79 CE) wrote what was widely considered to be the definitive account of the conflict in the Teutoburger Wald (the *Bella Germaniae*) although it is no longer extant (*ibid.*), and it is likely that this work was a major source for Tacitus (Gudeman 1900:100–105). A very brief account of the Roman defeat at the hands of Arminius is also found in Caius Suetonius Tranquillus’ *De Vita Caesarum*, Chpts. XVII and XXV (see bibliographic entry under Suetonius—the Loeb Classical Library titles his work *Suetonius*).

administering justice in the forum, and not a general in command of an army in the heart of Germany.

(Vell. Pat. XI.117.2–118.1)

Varus' practice of levying excessive taxes on the German tribes soon proved intolerable and Arminius, now chief of the Cheruskans, persuaded the chiefs of other Germanic tribes to join with him in revolt. Paterculus states that although Varus was warned of the plot he refused to take any action against the conspirators but 'insisted upon judging the apparent friendship of the Germans toward him by the standard of his merit' (Vell. Pat. II.118.4).

Arminius, both Paterculus and Tacitus tell us, was trained as a military commander by the Romans, achieving the rank of equestrian, and from approximately 4 CE onwards he commanded a Cheruscan detachment of Roman auxiliary forces in Germany (Vell. Pat. II.118.2; Tac. *Ann.* II.10). Having gained the support of his fellow chiefs, Arminius and his army lured Varus and the Roman troops (comprising in total approximately 25-30,000 men) to the Teutoburger Wald where they launched a ferocious attack, almost totally annihilating the Romans. Varus, certain of defeat, fell on his sword; his head was sent to Caesar Augustus in Rome (Vell. Pat. II.118). The news of the defeat threw Rome into consternation (Sue. *Aug.* XXIII).

When Tacitus resumes the tale, it is 14 CE and Germanicus has been given command of the legions stationed in Germania. By this time, on the strength of his victory, Arminius' forces have increased in number and his army is, if anything, an even more formidable force than that faced by Varus. Germanicus is ordered to restore the honour of Rome by defeating Arminius and sets about the task with 80,000 troops at his disposal. Tacitus portrays Germanicus as consumed with avenging Varus' ghost and honouring the fallen soldiers with a proper burial, almost, as Schama suggests, 'to the point of vicariously reliving the trauma' (2004:89). After a series of disastrous encounters with the Germans that seem to augur a repeat of Varus' debacle (Tac. *Ann.* I.162–169), Germanicus finally subdues Rome's enemies, but is then summoned back to Rome by a jealous Tiberias before the Roman position can be consolidated. Arminius survives, only to be betrayed and killed by his kinsmen in 19 CE (Tac. *Ann.* II.88). At the end of the second book of the *Annals*, in an obituary of Arminius, Tacitus hails him, claiming that, 'Assuredly he was the deliverer of Germany, one too who had defied Rome, not in her early rise, as other kings and generals, but in the height of her empire's glory, had fought, indeed, indecisive battles, yet in war remained unconquered' (*Ann.* II.88).

The efficacy of the *Germania's* and *Annals'* appearance for cultivating German patriotism cannot be exaggerated. As a form of proto-nationalism began to emerge in fifteenth-century Germany Arminius was recovered as the hero of Germany. For the German humanists of the time, the victories of Arminius were a powerful symbol of a divinely ordained German autonomy particularly against a scene in which a condescending Roman Papacy continued to assert its cultural and historical superiority. In 1471, a year after the *Germania* was first published in Venice, Pope Paul's legate, Giovannantonio Campano (1429–1477), spent several months in Regensburg as representative of the Holy See to the Imperial Diet. Campano was trying to win the support of German cities and princes, and, in particular, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III, to undertake a crusade against the Turks who had conquered Constantinople in 1453. Campano, drawing from Tacitus, flattered his hosts by eulogising the ancient Germans' military valour and nobility. However, his personal view of the Germans was unfortunately—for the Papal cause at any rate—revealed in private letters to friends in which he derided the Germans, their unproductive land, inclement climate, rough speech, simple way of life, and intellectual barbarism, drawing unfavourable contrasts with Rome. The letters were circulated widely shortly after they were written (Spitz 1957:94) and published in 1495 as *Opera Omnia* (Rowlands 1994:318, n. 25). Not only did the letters drastically dampen German support for efforts against the Turks, they generated increasing patriotic fervour and provoked indignant responses from many learned Germans, not least that of the poet laureate, scholar, and orator Conrad Celtis (1459–1508). As Schama suggests, Celtis was responsible 'more than any other Renaissance humanist...for reclaiming the *Germania* for the Germans' and he 'played a decisive role in pushing Germany away from the domination of papal Rome' (2004:92; 93).¹²

In an oration delivered in 1492 at the University of Ingolstadt, where he had been appointed a regular professor of the humanities, Celtis sought to inspire in his German audience an awareness of their renown in antiquity and purportedly natural nobility. Eight years later, when he had moved to Vienna, he presented the first series of lectures on the *Germania* urging his countrymen to

assume, O men of Germany, that ancient spirit of yours with which you so often confounded and terrified the Romans and turn your eyes to the frontiers of Germany; collect her torn and broken territories. Let us be ashamed...I say, to have placed upon our nation the yoke of slavery....O free and powerful people, O noble

¹² See also Spitz 1957:93–105; Borchardt 1971:106–109; Schellhase 1976:35–40; Benario 2004:84–85.

and valiant race....To such an extent are we corrupted by Italian sensuality and by fierce cruelty in extracting filthy lucre that it would have been far more holy and reverent for us to practice that rude and rustic life of old, living within the bounds of self-control, than to have imported the paraphernalia of sensuality and greed which are never sated, and to have adopted foreign customs.

(in Forster 1948:47, 53)

Celtis' reliance on Tacitus is unambiguous, both in his allusion to Arminius' victory over the Roman legions and in his evocation of the wholesome and simple way of life in ancient Germany.

In 1515 Tacitus' *Annales* I–VI were published and parallels were quickly drawn between the ancient enmity of Rome and Germany, and the current resistance by the Holy Roman Empire against papal dominance, a highlight of which was Martin Luther's ninety-five theses. The literary work which established Arminius as a German hero within sixteenth-century Germany was Ulrich von Hutten's *Arminius: Dialogus Huttenicus quo hom patriae amantissimus patriae laudem celebravit*, written in 1519–1520 and published posthumously in 1538.¹³ Hutten (1481–1523), who was an indignant opponent of the papacy and champion of Luther's Reformation and German patriotism, had spent some time in Italy in 1515 where he became acquainted with Tacitus' *Annales*. His *Arminius* was motivated by the desire to win political liberty and independence from Rome. In 1517 he was made poet laureate by the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519). *Arminius*, his best known work, is in the collection *Gesprächsbüchlein* (1521). The figure of Arminius, as 'Hermann der Cherusca', was resurrected at the height of nineteenth-century German romantic nationalism (along with a celebration of Hutten as the 'father' of German patriotism) as I will show in Chapter 6.

The *Germania* served, as Lincoln suggests, to '[break] the Mediterranean monopoly on antiquity, giving Germans...their first taste of the prestige derived from a deep and noble past' (1999:48). Moreover, the *Germania* was employed to render credible a belief in the unbroken continuity of the German people from a singular point of origin, an idea that was skilfully exploited by German humanists from the Renaissance onwards to oppose first Roman, and then French hegemony (see Reynolds 1955:29–37).¹⁴ The rise of German identity politics from the fifteenth century onwards—indebted to the discovery of a credible German hero and autochthonous roots—and the emergence of an

¹³ The first German translation did not appear until 1815.

¹⁴ See Schellhase 1976:31–65 for a detailed survey of the popularity of the *Germania* amongst German patriots—particularly Conrad Celtis—in the centuries that followed. See also Thom 1995:215–216.

ideal German type set the stage for the later romantic theorisation—or exploitation—of the content and aesthetic contours of ‘Germanness’.

An echo of this burgeoning interest in German origins was also provided by the Ossianic poetry of James Macpherson (1736–1796), which, in addition to the data provided by Tacitus, helped to enable German writers from the late seventeenth century onwards to theorise the noble character of Germanic ancestry gleaned from vernacular folklore.¹⁵ Macpherson’s Ossian had reached the intellectuals of eighteenth-century Germany, and in particular Herder, whom Schama (2004:102) aptly considers to be the heir of Celtis. Herder was a major influence on the *Sturm und Drang* (‘Storm and Stress’) literary movement¹⁶ which preceded German romanticism, and I will explore his mythology and theories of organic human development in the next section. Herder had first become acquainted with the Ossian poems in 1769 when he wrote a review of Michael Denis’ translation of the poems into German (*Die Gedichte Ossians eines alten*

¹⁵ Macpherson, a Scottish poet and teacher, born in the central Highlands of Scotland, compiled a considerable collection of Gaelic poetry in the aftermath of the defeat of the Scottish Jacobites at Culloden in 1746. The impact of the defeat and the imposition of English on the vernacular traditions of the Highlands was devastating as not only was use of the indigenous Gaelic language discouraged, but the customs and storytelling traditions were effectively wiped out, serving to underscore the political disenfranchisement of the population. In 1760 Macpherson published *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, Collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Galic or Erse Language* which purported to be a translation of the poetry of an ancient Scottish blind bard called Ossian. The publication of the poems was an immediate sensation as their depictions of ancient noble warriors and the Highlands’ humane, civilised society provided a means with which to reply to the charge of ‘savagery’ with which the English regularly taunted the Scottish people. See Dwyer 1991:169. Unfortunately for Macpherson, however, the provenance of the poems was soon challenged and he quickly found himself embroiled in a controversy regarding their authenticity.

¹⁶ The *Sturm und Drang* movement which took its name from F. M. von Klinger’s play about the American Revolution, *Wirrwarr; oder, Sturm und Drang* (1776), included Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805). It generated many of the central ideas of German romanticism and was characterised by its emphasis on the unease of the individual in contemporary society, particularly in view of the upheavals wrought by the Industrial, American, and French Revolutions. Its most distinctive feature was a belief in the original unity of humanity, one that had been discarded by Enlightenment’s bifurcation of human experience into the oppositional categories of reason and emotion, humanity and nature. The *Sturm und Drang* thinkers (*Sturmer*) idealised the integral unity of humans—particularly their ‘spiritual’ natures—with the natural world, suggesting that it constituted a prerequisite for human spiritual self-expression as the core component of authentic being. Moreover, as Whitton suggests, ‘it was language and the cultural creations generated by human linguistic activity that were identified as the essential medium through which this creative, expressive unity achieved its actualisation. In the natural creations of human language, the *Sturmer* believed, one could discern the aesthetic expression of the harmonious community of people with the greater spiritual whole which constituted their world’ (1988:159). It was during the *Sturm und Drang* period in Germany that calls for the revival of a national identity became a serious matter for intellectual consideration. While it was to be many years before these calls were actualised, many of the writers of the movement, Herder included, worked hard to ensure the revival of a truly authentic German tradition. See Pascal 1967 and Taylor 1975:Ch. 1.

Celtischen Dichters, aus dem Englischen übersetzt von M Denis aus der G. J. [‘The Poems of the old Celtic poet Ossian, from the English Language, translated by M. Denis’], 1768/9).¹⁷ Seeing Ossian as a symbol of authentic native expression, opposed to the cosmopolitan literature of neo-classicism, he wrote *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker* (‘Extract from a Correspondence about Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples’) in 1773, suggesting that the lyrical expression of the Ossian poems was characteristic of all peoples whose traditions were hermetically contained. For Herder, accepting that Macpherson was sincere, Ossian’s poems were ‘songs of the people, songs of an uncultivated, sense-perceptive people’ (in Clark 1955:147), and he believed that the survival of the Ossian fragments held out hope for a similar recovery of German traditions which were being lost through the imposition of French formalist literary conventions. Macpherson’s work—or at least, the Ossianic corpus—was, therefore, in Herder’s eyes, an especially useful model for the reconstruction of Germanic traditions and identity. It is in the context of the retrieval of German origins through Tacitus, as well as the latter threat posed to the autonomy of the German culture by French ideological imperialism, that Herder’s interest in Macpherson’s Ossian as a prototype of the nobility of tribal origins is understandable. It also helps to make sense of the valorisation of the German *Volk* found in his organicist theories of history, to which I will now turn.

III. Herder’s Organicism and the Importance of the Volk

Herder was born in East Prussia in 1744. He studied philosophy at the University of Königsberg under Immanuel Kant and the ‘irrationalist’ philosopher Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788). He soon became an established philosopher in his own right. In 1774 he published his first essay in the philosophy of history, ‘Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit’ (‘Yet Another Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity’), which was followed by *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* (‘On the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry’, 1782–3), and his major work *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (‘Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity’, 1784–91), amongst numerous other writings. It was in the *Ideen* that Herder most comprehensively developed his philosophy of social organicism and elaborated a theory of history as the differentiated development of discrete *Volk*.¹⁸ His main aim in doing so was to critique

¹⁷ See Gaskill 2001:212–213.

¹⁸ I will define what I mean by the terms ‘social organicism’ and ‘Volk’ shortly.

the basic assumptions of the Enlightenment conception of history and human nature. As Brian Whitton notes, Herder's hostility towards Enlightenment rationalism and cosmopolitanism was directed at its tendency to abstract history and ethnic identities 'from their connection with the contingent elements of human historical, linguistic, and cultural practices' (1988:150; see also Herder 1969:197).

Herder's problem with expansive cosmopolitanism was that it threatened to erase unique and valuable differences between cultures under a slogan of universalism by imposing what was, instead, a narrow ideological paradigm whose application was only appropriate to the distinct context of European society in the eighteenth century. In the *Ideen*, Herder took exception to the Enlightenment notion that the eighteenth century was the apogee of human civilisation: 'It would be the most stupid vanity to imagine that all the inhabitants of the world must be Europeans to live happily' (1803, I:393). He also warned of the danger inherent in the imposition of generalised ideals like equality and liberty, although importantly not fraternity, suggesting that they could be used to justify the domination of one culture over others (1969:320). Against the Enlightenment view of sociality, Herder developed an organic theory of human evolution organised around three core principles which he believed characterised the uniqueness of individual *Volk* which I will now discuss: climate, language, and *Nationalbildung* (the transmission of traditions).

(i) *Climate, Language, and Nationalbildung: The Volk in History*

This section will only deal with the philosophy of organicism as it pertains to Herder's theories of the history of the *Volk*. By referring to Herder's thought as organicist I mean to indicate that he considered society to be an organic structure, on the model of a biological organism, where values and social forms evolved according to natural law rather than through deliberate human intervention. Herder's notion of what constitutes the 'natural' will be discussed below when I present his theory of *Naturordnung*. Herder's theories of social organicism owed much to the earlier work of Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) as well as that of Charles de Montesquieu (1689–1755). Vico's historicist and Montesquieu's holistic theories both focused on discrete ethnic communities as the foundation of social development and they welcomed the diversity of nations.

Isaiah Berlin identifies three concepts that encapsulate Herder's organicism, summarising them as 'populism', 'expressionism', and 'pluralism' (1976:153). He

suggests that they explain both Herder's organicism and his enduring influence on the German intellectuals who followed. For Berlin, Herder's concept of populism consists of a 'belief in the value of belonging to a group or a culture, which...is not political, and is indeed, to some degree, anti-political, different from, and even opposed to, nationalism' (*ibid.*). Expressionism is the idea that all human activities, especially artistic expression, 'express the entire personality of the individual or group, and are intelligible only to the degree to which they do so'. Moreover, these expressions are 'voices speaking', in that they are 'part of a living process of communication between persons and not independently existing entities' (1976:165). Berlin interprets Herder's notion of expressionism, therefore, as a 'network of belief and behaviours which binds men to one another'¹⁹ within that community, a network that is then articulated through 'common, public symbolism', or language (*ibid.*). This pronounced individualism may hinder intercultural ties, however, and in this sense, Herder's notion of pluralism posits the incommensurability of the values of different cultures and societies (1976:153).

Herder's view of history, informed as it was by his organicist orientation, was one where its iterative and accumulative quality was emphasised: a community accrues its culture and tradition through its interaction with unique geographical, linguistic, and historical confluences, a process which is embedded in what he calls the *Naturordnung* ('natural order'). Herder viewed the development of the *Volk* within this order as 'a chain of sociability and educational tradition' (*'eine Kette der Geselligkeit und bildende Tradition'*; 1841:337), thus emphasising the importance of a cohesion and stability of values upon which future generations can build. It is difficult to offer a satisfactory English translation of the term *Volk* as found in Herder's work. As Lincoln notes, 'it is a term whose full denotative and affective significance is lost in its lame English equivalents (e.g., "folk," "people," "ethnicity," or "nation")' (1999:53). However, Rudolf Große's inventory of its constituent aspects helps to clarify its range and resonance: 'community of people; common ancestry; shared lifestyles; shared ways of thinking; common culture; same language' (in Tully 1997:6, fn. 9). Kenneth Minogue's definition is also helpful: 'not simply the people of a country, but a metaphysical entity defined relationally as that which produces a particular language, art, culture, set of great men, religion and collection of customs. All of these things are taken, not as products of

¹⁹ While Berlin's use of the term 'men' here is clearly intended, however deplorably, as generic noun to indicate humanity, to read it as gendered is not altogether mistaken. As I will show shortly, Herder did in fact view a community's traditions to be passed down the male line.

individual men but as manifestations of the spirit of the people, or *volksgeist*' (1967:57). Ernst Dick provides a more politically-nuanced definition when he states that 'Volk can stand for a number of meanings...the people as a nation (L. *populus*, *natio*)...the people belonging to a historical subdivision of a nation, or to a tribal society (L. *gens*, G. *Stamm*); and...the people of the lower classes, the governed class, the uneducated, who, depending on the point of view, may be regarded as the common people (L. *vulgus*) or as rabble (L. *plebs*)' (1990:18–19).

Among the influences that affect the organic socialisation of the *Volk*, Herder identified three key factors: climate, or geographical location, language, and *Nationalbildung*.²⁰ The distinctiveness of a community first evolves through its interaction with the climate of the regions that it inhabits. This interaction produces, in turn, both the customs and physical characteristics of the community:

As the mineral water derives its component parts, its operative power, and its flavour from the soil through which it flows, so the ancient character of peoples arose from the family features, the climate, the way of life and education, the early reactions and employments, that were peculiar to them. The manners of the fathers took deep root and became the internal prototype of the descendants.

(1993, XIV:84)

More important than climate for marking the distinctiveness of a community, however, is language, which was seen by Herder as the primary expression of reflexive consciousness (Whitton 1988:151). In this sense, language is the medium through which individuals formulate and articulate their experiences of the external world and so, as Lincoln observes, for Herder it both 'reflect[ed] a *Volk*'s environs and historic experience and structures its thought and social relations' (1999:53). According to Herder, this process of conscious and continuous linguistic development was fundamentally a social process and facilitated the inclusion of individuals within a broader linguistic community. Isaiah Berlin describes Herder's promotion of this organic and continuous socialisation in terms of 'belonging', suggesting that

The notion of belonging is at the heart of all Herder's ideas. His doctrine of the unity of theory and practice, like that of his populism, is intelligible only in terms of it. To belong is not a passive condition, but active co-operation, social labour.

(1976:195).

For Herder, then, the function of language was to integrate individuals into the community by enabling them to acquire a sense of shared identity and endeavour, an

²⁰ Herder was not the first to note the influence of climate and environment on the development of human societies. Jean Bodin (1530-1596) had renewed the medieval theory of climates and had given it a pseudo-scientific application to history, and Montesquieu (1689–1755) had also developed a conception of the influence of climate upon the state. See Spitz 1955:461.

operation that he called *Nationalbildung*. He saw culture as essentially *national* and his theory of *Nationalbildung* suggested that it was the mode through which the community could labour collectively to articulate—and guard—its unique cultural consciousness embodied in its language. In the course of assimilating the language of their community, individuals incorporated their cultural heritage, a process that ensured the continuity of the community's history, traditions, and unique worldview. The transmission of tradition, for Herder, was through education (*bildung*) particularly insofar as the iterative quality of education lent itself well to the dissemination and preservation of the values and ancient practices of a *Volk* (1803:227).

Herder's vision of education was certainly distinct from that of mainstream Enlightenment thought which conceived of education as a fundamentally progressive tool, enabling individuals to acquire uniform knowledge through the application of reason and to discern truth. Tradition was accordingly devalued and subordinated to reason as the key to progressive social change. Conversely, Herder felt that change—if it was to be beneficial—had to be gradual and implemented with reference to tradition and cultural specificity.²¹ Herder's view of education as tradition was, in the main, geared toward upholding the existing social order as it had been forged over time. Jennifer Fox notes the patriarchal subtext to this view of tradition as maintaining the social order, suggesting that for Herder, 'the very essence of tradition is masculine. Whereas the maternal province is to provide physical nourishment by the breast, the paternal role is to provide spiritual nourishment by instilling tradition' (1987:567). Herder provided a clear example of his differentiation between paternal and maternal roles that helps to support Fox's claim:

Paternal love...is best displayed by a manly education. The father early inures his son to his own mode of life: teaches him his art, awakens in him the sense of fame, and in him loves himself, when he shall grow old, or be no more. This feeling is the basis of all hereditary honour and virtue: it renders education a public, an external work: it has been the instrument of transmitting to posterity all the excellencies and prejudices of the human species.

(1803:216)

The model of paternal transmission as the most natural and legitimate idiom for the preservation of tradition is a common and powerful one, and is demonstrably a foundational myth of patriarchy. Along with myths of male parthenogenesis, its implications for a feminist politics of identity and philosophy of myth are considered in

²¹ Herder promoted radical reform of elementary German education and during his tenure in Weimar (1776–1803) where he was the minister of education, he revised the school curriculum in order to ensure pupils' immersion in German culture, language, and history (Hayes 1927:732).

detail in Chapters 8 and 9. However, here I would note that the model of patrilineal dissemination contained in Herder's notions of *Nationalbildung* became a central—if tacitly assumed—aspect of the German nostalgia for origins and the formulation of German models of indigenous identity.

The patriarchal family unit, for Herder, thus played a crucial role in transmitting values and traditions from one generation to the next. The parent, Herder argued, is the natural instructor of the child. 'Each individual is son or daughter....He or she receives from the earliest moments of life part of the cultural treasures of the ancestral heritage...[which he or she] in turn passes on' (1969:312–313). Education supervised by family, teachers, and friends established a 'chain of unity and continuity in which each link...[receives and transmits] the cultural heritage of the *Volk* [in a process which entails] language and its continuous growth' (1969:170). Importantly, this model of genetic transmission served to enhance the specificity and uniqueness of a *Volk*, untainted as it was assumed to be by outside influences; traditions were literally kept 'in the family'. He explicitly invoked Tacitus' *Germania*, urging his fellow Germans to read it in order to gain a picture of the original German character:

Read Tacitus, because there you will find our character; the German tribes who themselves have not degenerated through intermixture with others, they are a distinct, unadulterated original nation which is the archetype of itself.

(1877, I:367)

He further argued that 'These barbarians are our fathers, their language the source of our language, and their unrefined songs the mirror of the ancient German soul [reflected] in the simplicity of our character' (1877, II:246). Thus, Herder's model of transmission was, in effect, a genealogical fiction that aimed to sustain the collectivity of the group and, further, contained a strong subtext of racial purity (see Schöpflin 1997:34).²²

²² Herder's exclusivist model will be discussed in the context of German nationalism and its consequent anti-Semitism in Chapter 7, but in the interim some comment is required here regarding Herder's attitude towards Jewish people, particularly in view of the fact that his theories of the *Volk* were later resurrected in the service of German anti-Semitism. Lincoln, who is one of the few scholars to draw attention to Herder's frequent use of anti-Semitic stereotypes, argues that for Herder, the Jews in diaspora 'were a *Volk* radically detached from their homeland' and as a result posed a threat to the unique collective identity of the *Völker* in whose lands they had settled (1999:56). By way of example, Lincoln cites Herder on the subject of the Jews: 'God's *Volk*, to whom Heaven itself once gave their *Vaterland*, for millennia—indeed, almost since their beginning—have been a parasitical plant on the trunks of other nations; a race of crafty brokers throughout almost the whole World, who, in spite of all oppression, have nowhere longed for their own honour and dwelling, nowhere longed for a *Vaterland* of their own' (*ibid.* [Ideen 3.12.3]). It is easy to see how Herder's organicist theories could lead him to such a view. By exalting the uniqueness of each *Volk* through its primordial connection to the land and its language, it was

In spite of Herder's emphasis on cultural diversity, he situated his account of the historical development of the *Volk* within a broader notion of providential *Humanität*, a divinely sanctioned human essence that was the bedrock of the heterogeneous traditions of every community.²³ He suggested that, while human cultural expression was immensely variegated, 'within this ever changing husk the kernel of human substance remains...the same' (1969:215). For Herder, each *Volk* was a distinctive entity that held within itself what Whitton calls 'a unique variation on the theme of humanity and a corresponding tendency to develop this variant to its fullest extent' (1988:156). Within Herder's cultural organicism, then, the exponential development of heterogeneous cultural forms was conceived as an infinite, unfolding narrative. The historical generation of diversity, from the singular or monogenetic ground of *Humanität* was, 'God's epic through all the centuries...a fable with a thousand variations full of meaning' (1969:283). The notion of *Humanität*, however, should not be confused with the universalism of Enlightenment formulations. For Herder, *Humanität* was only visible and intelligible through close attention to cultural difference.

(ii) Herder on Myth and the Volk

The carefully balanced tension between the one and the many was reflected in Herder's understanding of the role and place of myths in the development and continuity of the *Volk*. He argued for the need to examine myths in their indigenous context, and called for communities to retrieve their own myths in order to nourish their authentic communal identity. He opposed the Enlightenment dismissal of myth as superstitious and irrational, insisting instead that myths were only comprehensible through an empathetic recognition²⁴ of their truth for the people who created and believe in them.

somewhat inevitable that 'alien' elements would need to be isolated and that the Jews would be represented as an exemplar of a lack of rootedness. This is not to say that Herder was unsympathetic to the Jews' long estrangement from their land. He advocated, after all, that the Jewish people should be granted a homeland, a stance which has, ironically, led some to read him as philo-Semitic (*ibid.*).

²³ Berlin suggests that the 'notoriously vague' concept of *Humanität* denotes the 'harmonious development of all immortal souls towards universally valid goals: reason, freedom, toleration, mutual love and respect between individuals and societies, as well as physical and spiritual health, finer perceptions, dominion over the earth, the harmonious realization of all that God has implanted in His noblest work and made in His own image' (1976:193). Herder's notion of *Humanität* is clearly indebted to the formulations of the deists, particularly in its invocation of an original natural religion in which all ancient people had purportedly participated in the earliest stages of their development.

²⁴ Feldman and Richardson suggest that Herder may have coined the German word *Einfühlung* or 'empathy' to refer to this way of approaching other people's myths (1972:226).

Thus, as Feldman and Richardson argue, according to Herder, 'Myth...is never simply false, but only relatively so; that is, false to those who have other myths, other world-views....In short, all myth not only seems alive and true to its believers, but indeed *is* true' (1972:226). This equivocal view of myth's veracity strongly foreshadowed the later romantic view of myths: rather than being materially true in any simplistic sense, they conveyed deeper 'spiritual' truths that revealed both the spirit of the *Volk* and their particular expression of the universally inscribed divine will. As Feldman and Richardson suggest, Herder was 'the first really influential thinker to emancipate myth from rationalist or Christian context and strictures, opening it to world horizons, the dimension of historical time and cultural relativism, and deepening its meaning as a profound mode of truth' (1972:225).

In the poems of Ossian (and Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 1765) Herder saw great promise for his own quest to recover the ancient German past through the recovery of vernacular folklore and myth and to build a sense of German community. He wanted, therefore, to stimulate a deeper study of national, social and cultural history, of folk songs, ballads, traditional lore, and language, and he reproached his more cosmopolitan contemporaries for their neglect of these genres. Of course, the problem for Herder was that the Germany of his day could hardly be called a nation at all, for all the reasons discussed above. Under these circumstances, Herder's main concern was to discover the sources of a distinctly German literary tradition and therefore to nurture a feeling of German unity amongst his compatriots. It was necessary, however, for Herder first to gain recognition for the German language as an umbrella under which to create a sense of cultural unity. For Herder, a nationality and literature without a language of its own was inconceivable and he urged Germans to 'know your own language...and develop it for poetry, philosophy, and prose. For then you are building the foundation which will hold a building' (in Ergang 1931:155).²⁵

For Herder the reasons for the lack of a distinctive German tradition in literature were immediately obvious. He placed the blame firmly on the impact of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and the subsequent domination of Latin and French over the German language. Further, he deplored the intellectual and stylistic debt of German

²⁵ His near contemporary Justus Möser (1720–1794) held similar views and he too called for a literature that was specifically German in its content and form, one that would provide an effective challenge to French hegemony. Möser was also instrumental in establishing a movement for the purification and development of High German which he thought could rival French and which had the added benefit of being the language of the common people. See Ergang 1933:182.

writers to French literary traditions, suggesting that Germany had as a result been prevented from taking pride in its own culture and history. Herder argued against the slavish imitation of non-vernacular idioms by suggesting that it was in fact the particular idioms within a language that established its unique ability to express a *Volk*'s own genius and character (1877, XIII:369–370).

His argument for the use of the German language arguably foreshadowed his view that a people's sense of themselves as a nation was derived from its folklore and it was after he had read Percy and the Ossian poems that he was persuaded that the way to recover and safeguard Germany's language and narrative traditions was to follow the English and Scottish examples and collect the folksongs among the peasantry.²⁶ Herder firmly believed that the German folk tradition was at least the equal of the English and Scottish revival and was the means by which Germany could produce a unique and definable high literature of its own, one that would, in turn, aid the development of national sentiment and a reciprocal sense of belonging to an ancient and heroic *Volk* (1877, IX:528–529).

Herder's view of myth and folklore was remarkably radical when, for the aristocracy of the time as well as Enlightenment thinkers in the eighteenth century, the idea that a sophisticated literary tradition could be derived from the folklore of the lowest orders of society, or from a German vernacular was virtually unthinkable. One of the Enlightenment projects was to raise the educational level of the peasants until, through the acquisition and application of rational thought, they would be ready to join those who had already been 'liberated' from ancient myth and superstition. Herder was strongly opposed to this idea, believing that the peasants were in no need of improvement but rather that their simple lifestyle, customs, and narrative traditions were to be emulated. The folk traditions of every native *Volk*, for Herder, were valuable

²⁶ It is possible that Herder was influenced by Rousseau's proto-romantic notion of the noble savage (*le bon sauvage*) which Rousseau discussed in his essay 'Discourse on the Arts and Sciences' (1750) and later elaborated in his *Discourse on Equality* (1754), although, it is the poet John Dryden (1631–1700) who is credited with coining the term in his comedy *Marriage A-la-Mode* (1672). Rousseau contended that the individual was good by nature, a 'noble savage' when in the state of nature but corrupted by the development of civilisation and society. As Barnard suggests, 'When Rousseau, Herder, or the Romantics invoked nature, they did so in order to oppose the contrived and artificial to the authentic and spontaneous. They wished to remind men that natural growth could be stunted, human capacities and human development warped, that, in short, 'progress' could mean decay and alienation' (1983:233). Herder insisted that the natural simplicity of the 'savage' was a firm foundation for nurturing national sentiment: 'The savage who loves his wife and child with quiet joy and glows with natural ardour for his tribe as for his own life, is in my opinion a more real being than that cultivated ghost who is enraptured with the shadow of his whole species' (1877, XIII. 339).

in their own terms, without regard to the progress of human civilisation or its achievements at any given time.

For Herder, myth represented both a principle of equality which united all of human experience, and a principle of diversity which allowed for unique expression of *Völkisch* experience; although each nation created a distinct literature from its own folk heritage, folk poetry was valuable 'because of its constant and international elements' (Clark 1955:431). Herder thus set about collecting folksongs and narratives from a wide range of sources, publishing his *Volkslieder* ('Folksongs', a term he coined in 1771). The first volume included not only German folksongs but also examples from Italian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Danish, Spanish, Inca, Eskimo, Latin, Greek, and Old Norse. The work stands as an instance of Herder's remarkable insight into the relationship between indigenous and universal values.

In Herder's work, therefore, it is clear that he considered myths to be a primary resource for the collective identity of the *Volk*, particularly in terms of their absorption and transmission, in narrative form, of the effects of climate and language, and their role in *Nationalbildung*.²⁷ His interpretation of the role and status of myth corresponded to his theories of social organicism, and in particular to the identity of the *Volk* within the broader frame of *Humanität*. Myth, for Herder, was an organic historical process and the major motifs he employed in his copious reflections on myth reflected this attitude: myths demonstrated the original organic unity of all human experience as well as the independence of different cultures; they corresponded without mediation to particular *Volk*; they attested to divine ordination in history; and they cemented a *Volk*'s self-understanding and traditions. Furthermore, for Herder, myths mobilised and expressed the three factors that affected the organic socialisation of the *Volk*—climate and environment, language, and *Nationalbildung*. As Lincoln suggests, in Herder's understanding, 'the environment impresses itself directly on the bodies of a *Volk*, it impresses itself on their customs and mores through the medium of myths, which the *Volk* use to reflect on their surroundings and history and to transmit ancestral traditions from one generation to another' (Lincoln 1999:53). As such, myths were the means through which a *Volk* produced, recollected, and ensured the continuity of its distinctive identity.

²⁷ Ironically, however, as Poliakov notes, 'German mythology was only preserved outside Germany in Scandinavian sagas or in the writings of Roman historians and the only myths of origin preserved by direct transmission are those of the expatriate, more or less de-Germanized, *Stämme* [tribes]—the Goths, Lombards, Burgundians, Angles and Saxons' (1974:74).

Myths, for Herder were the authentic markers of the differences in, and incommensurability of national narratives (1841:2). However, Herder, in classic deist mode, also maintained that myths serve as a medium through which the common origins of humanity—the site of the original creation of *Humanität*—could be recovered. He outlined his recuperative project in Book X of the first volume of the *Ideen*, further elaborating it in the second volume (published in 1785) and concluding that the site of origin, the homeland (*Urheimat*) of humanity was in Central Asia or Tibet (1803:518). The notion of an *Urheimat* accumulated enormous significance in the formulation of German identity, particularly as a way of resisting the cosmopolitanism of Enlightenment philosophy and of rivalling the asserted Graeco-Roman pedigree of other European nations. I will return to Herder's impact on German nationalism in Chapters 4–7, but I first want to consider the early genealogy of the idea of the *Urheimat* in order to explain why it gained particular resonance for the German people in the nineteenth century, and to explore further why it played such a strong role in their imaginings of nation.

CHAPTER THREE

'LANGUAGES OF PARADISE': SEMITES, ARYANS, AND THE EUROPEAN SEARCH FOR ORIGINS

I. William Jones and the 'Discovery' of Sanskrit

In a now famous statement to the Asiatic Society of Calcutta in 1786, the linguist and colonial administrator Sir William Jones (1746–1794) announced his discovery of the lexical and structural affinities between Sanskrit, Latin and Greek which he argued suggested a common origin for the language group, along with Gothic and Celtic (1807, III:34–35). Three years later, similarly to Herder, he extended his theory to suggest that the original homeland of this primordial linguistic community was Central Asia. In contrast to Herder, however, Jones' theory of linguistic affiliations posited Asian origins not for all humankind, but for one large and important language family, of which German was a part. Nonetheless, and very importantly, for both Herder and Jones, common linguistic origins indicated common ethnic unity. Their location of the original people in Central Asia was largely influenced by a literal reading of the Biblical narrative of Noah, derived from Genesis 8:4 which relates how Noah's ark came to rest on Mount Ararat, believed by biblical scholars of the time to be located in Armenia. Jones differed slightly in that he considered that the location for Noah's story and the events of the Tower of Babel which followed the Flood (Genesis 11) were

described as having happened between the Oxus and Euphrates, the mountains of the Caucius and the borders of India, that is within the limits of Iran...it is no longer probable only, but absolutely certain, that the whole race of man proceeded from Iran, whence they migrated at first in three great colonies; and that those three branches grew from a common stock.

(1792:486–487)

There is no evidence to suggest that Herder's and Jones' theories of origin were influenced by each other or that they conferred with each other. For Lincoln, the concurrence of their strikingly similar conclusions is explained by their 'common preconceptions based on their reading of the Bible' (1999:54).¹ Thomas Trautmann, who

¹ See Lincoln 1999:76–100; 2002, and Bryant 2001:14–18 for a full summary of Jones' discovery and its relationship to common scriptural understandings of the history of races. See also David 1996 for an analysis of Jones' Indian scholarship and its relationship to 'Biblical Orientalism'. S. N. Mukherjee 1968 is also helpful for an overview of Jones' Indological scholarship within the context of British colonial rule.

prioritises the ethnological character of Jones work against his contributions to Orientalist philology, also suggests that Jones' 'entire project' offers a 'rational defense of the Bible out of the materials collected by Orientalist scholarship, more specifically a defense of the Mosaic account of human history in its earliest times' (1999:42; see also Bryant 2001:14–18). Herder was similarly committed to the Biblical account and admired Hebraic narratives, as his *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* demonstrated. Jones—all the while claiming loyalty to methodological disinterestedness and a commitment to the scholarly principles of objectivity²—was concerned that his work should not be used as a weapon by those who doubted the authenticity of the Biblical account of origins, stating that 'either the first eleven chapters of Genesis...are true, or the whole fabrick of our national religion is false, a conclusion which none of us, I trust, would wish to be drawn' (1788:225).³

² For example, when taking up the challenge to investigate Hindu chronologies that hinted at the world's immense antiquity, all of which were at considerable variance with that formulated by Bishop Ussher (1581–1656) who had suggested a creation date of 4004 BCE with Noah's flood occurring in 2349 BCE, Jones stated that his intention was to 'lay before you a concise history of Indian chronology extracted from Sanskrit books, attached to no system, and as much disposed to reject Mosaic history, if it be proved erroneous, as to believe it, if it be confirmed by sound reason from indubitable evidence' (1790:111). However, an earlier statement revealed that he regarded biblical veracity as unassailable: 'I...am obliged of course to believe the sanctity of the venerable books [of the Bible]' (1788:225). He concluded his research into Indian chronologies by tracing the founding of its civilisation to c. 2000 BCE (1790:145), that is, well within Ussher's creation date. However, as Trautmann notes, this was only achieved by ignoring the many Indian chronologies that indicated huge time spans offered by the *yuga*, *kalpa*, and *manvantara* systems (1997:58). The impetus to reassert the historicity of the Old Testament chronology was the direct result of European colonial expansion and the consequent discovery that many non-European cultures possessed genealogical lists and creation accounts that pointed to the vast antiquity of the earth. Moreover, the proliferation of 'hard' archaeological and geological evidence had joined with the scepticism of the Enlightenment iconoclasts to generate a radical reappraisal of biblical veracity in matters of chronology and creation. Bryant maintains that issues such as 'the monogenic descent from Adam, the evolution of language from the monolingual descendants of Noah, and the brief period that seemed to be allotted to the dispersion of the human race after the Flood became the subjects of intense debates'. He further suggests that as the early British scholars in India began to unearth Sanskrit texts the origins of the world 'became the cause of both great anticipation and epistemological anxiety' (2001:14). These concerns are discussed below.

³ Trautmann suggests, therefore, that one of the main reasons why Jones, and British scholars more generally (at least up until the early nineteenth century), were so interested in Sanskrit was that it provided independent verification of Biblical narrative, for example, the flood myth as related in the *Padma Purāṇa* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Jones connected Noah with the sage Manu in the story in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* where Manu is warned by Viṣṇu (in his incarnation as a fish) of an impending world flood. Manu and seven sages embark on a boat which is fastened to a horn on the fish, and they are towed to safety on top of a mountain. When the flood subsides the world is created anew. While the parallels between the two narratives are indeed striking, Jones used them to affirm the primacy of the Biblical account (1799a:241–2). In other words, Jones saw the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*'s account to be derived from the Mosaic account and to be, furthermore, a distorted version (recalling the deist view of mythology during the Enlightenment) a fact reflected in his belief that in Hindu mythology '[h]istorical, or natural, truth [Biblical narrative] has been

The idea of a common source for all languages—initially considered to be Hebrew—which was regularly associated with a common people, was taken for granted by most scholars in Europe until well after the Enlightenment. The basic point of departure for reflections on the origins of mankind, again owing much to the biblical version of history, was the belief that the human races descended from the three sons of the Biblical patriarch Noah as narrated in Genesis 9 and 10: Ham, Shem, and Japheth, to whom there was occasionally added a fourth brother, Jenithon or Manithon (Poliakov 1974:7).⁴ As such it was an account which clearly implied patrilineal descent. This theme (that of a posited origin for humanity from a common source), even when stripped of its biblical trappings, was to remain thoroughly imprinted in European scholarship until well into the twentieth century. The dominant tendency (despite numerous variations), from which Jones departed, was to attribute the parentage of the European people to the children of Japheth, the Asians to those of Shem, and the Africans to those of Ham. Jones was particularly interested in the genealogy of the people of Asia, dividing them into five principal ethnic groupings: Indians, Chinese, Tartars, Arabs, and Persians (Trautmann 1997:41).⁵ Jones argued, on the basis of linguistic evidence, that the Persians

perverted into fable by ignorance, imagination, flattery, or stupidity' (1799a:230). Intriguingly, following Jones' death in 1794, an impressive statue of him was installed in the central vestibule of St. Paul's Cathedral. It depicts him, toga-clad, resting his arm on a book which is titled after his translation of the *Mānava Dharmaśāstra* (*Translation of the Institutes of Menu* [sic.]). Beneath the pedestal is a pivotal scene from the Hindu myth of the churning of the ocean, depicting a pantheon of Indian divinities, and showing the retrieval of a rainbow from the ocean. As Trautmann remarks, 'It is all quite astonishing to find this scene from Hindu scriptures, not to speak of graven images of Viṣṇu and other gods, in a Christian church' (1997:79–80). While those who commissioned the statue surely intended simply to acknowledge Jones' role in discovering proof for the veracity of the Christian scriptures, in that the rainbow is symbolic of God's promise to Noah never again to flood the earth, the result is quite the reverse. The Hindu 'other' has penetrated the sacred space of the colonising subject, and while it seemingly provides the (evidential) platform upon which Europeans could construct their self-sustaining narratives as guardians of the 'truth', it rather undermines it.

⁴ See Genesis 9:19–27; 10:32. Josephus interpreted these injunctions to indicate that the descendants of Shem populated 'Asia to the Indian Ocean' and that the sons of Japheth advanced 'in Asia to the river *Tanaïs* [the Don] and in Europe to *Gadeira* [Cadiz]' (1998, VI:1–4, 36–43). The Church Fathers, who had read Josephus, attributed the peopling of Africa to Ham. Shem, marked in Genesis by his privileged link to the eternal Elohim, received Asia. Japheth, whose Hebrew name evokes 'beauty' as well as 'openness', the 'wide space' of a legacy capable of 'dilation' and 'expansion', was the father of Europe. For the readers of the Septuagint the etymological fiction of a 'Euru-opa', meaning 'wide vision' served to confirm the providential ambition of this continent which 'sees far' (*eurus, ops*). See Olender 1994:10.

⁵ The potential consequences of Jones' promotion of this schema are themselves worth reflecting on. Lincoln points to some of the problematic undercurrents present in Jones' racial taxonomy, suggesting that 'the overarching project of [Jones'] "Anniversary Discourses" was to reduce the degree to which the Hebrews were privileged above all others....For all that there is something liberating, humane, and admirable in Jones' having championed the peoples of Asia, one also perceives troubling aspects to his project, one motive of which was resentment of the privilege

and the Chinese were probably branches of the Indian race and concluded, therefore, that the Indians, Arabs, and Tartars were most likely to be original stock. He then identified each of these with one of the sons of Noah: the Indians with Ham, the Arabs with Shem, and the Tartars with Japheth.⁶

Jones was not the first to suggest a common origin for the languages of Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and other European languages, and for the related people groups. From the sixteenth century onwards something approaching a systematic comparison of the languages of India, Greek, and Latin had developed, aided by contact with native populations through the spice trade and the proselytising mission of the Jesuits (see Schwab 1984:26–33). The Jesuit missionary Père Gaston Coeurdoux (1691–1779) suggested in a memoir written in 1767, known to the members of the *Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* but not published until 1808,⁷ that

Japheth...bringing with him a third of humanity...headed toward the West....His seven children no doubt became the heads of as many great families, each one of which must have spoken one of the new original languages, such as Latin, Greek, Slavonic, etc. May I be permitted to add to these Sanskrit (*samskroutam*); it is as deserving as any other language, given its extensive reach, to be numbered among the primitive languages.

(in Anquetil-Duperron 1808:664)⁸

Furthermore, he made a clear connection with ‘Mosaic ethnology’ (see Trautmann 1997:9) when he argued that

the Samskroutam language is that of the ancient Brahmes; they came to India from the north of that country, from Caucasia, from Tartary Of the sons of Japhet, some spoke Samskroutam. Before their total separation, their languages were somewhat mixed because of the communication they had among each other; and there remain vestiges of that ancient intercourse, in the common words which still exist.

accorded to Israelite history, religion, and Scripture. Particularly dangerous was his reduction of human diversity to three primal categories and the scholarly cum mythic narrative through which he sought to redistribute privilege from one racialized group to another....For just as Jones renamed the sons of Shem and Ham the “Arabian” and “Hindu” races and then crafted a narrative that made them nearly equal, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, others would rename the same groups “Aryans” (or Indo-Europeans) and “Semites” in narratives that trumpeted ever more shrilly the racial superiority of the conquering state-founders over the authors of the Bible’ (2002:16–17). That this indeed occurred in the context of the rise of German nationalism and the articulation of the German people’s belief in their Aryan identity is a point I will return to Chapter 7.

⁶ Jones here went against the traditional way of distributing humankind’s ancestry amongst the three sons of Noah. Trautmann suggests that a potential reason for this is that Jones derived the basis of his speculations from the conclusions of Jacob Bryant (1715–1804) and he also sets out the details of Jones’ scheme (2004:42–47).

⁷ The text was published by Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805) as *Mémoires de Littérature, tirés des registres de l’Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*. See Schwab 1934 and 1984:26–27 for an overview of Anquetil’s role in establishing ‘oriental’ studies.

⁸ See also Olender 1994:20.

(in Trautmann 1997:54).⁹

For Coeurdoux, therefore, rather than being descendants of Ham (as Jones was later to suggest), the Indian race was derived from Magog, son of Japheth. Coeurdoux, in investigating the structural correspondences between Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit, therefore proposed a 'Japhethic solution' which brought together Europe and a newly mobilised East (Olender 1994:20).

The affinities between Sanskrit and ancient European languages were also suspected by a number of British scholars prior to Jones' announcement, for example, John Zephaniah Holwell (1711–1798), Nathaniel Halhed (1751–1830), Alexander Dow (c. 1710–1779), and James Parsons (1705–1770).¹⁰ Jones was also not unique in suggesting an extinct original language from which the languages of Latin, Greek, *et al.* were derived. In 1688, prior to the 'discovery' of Sanskrit, Andreas Jäger (d. 1731) had speculated that

An ancient language, once spoken in the distant past in the area of the Caucasus mountains and spreading by waves of migration throughout Europe and Asia...ceased to be spoken and...left no linguistic monuments behind, but...as a "mother" generated a host of "daughter languages...[D]escendants of the ancestral language include Persian, Greek, Italic,...the Slavonic languages, Celtic, and finally Gothic.

(in Metcalf 1974:233).

However, it was 'Jones' status and reputation...[that] ensured that news of this language connection reverberated through the academic halls of Europe' (Bryant 2001:16; see also Muller 1986 and Metcalf 1974). In addition to theories of an original language, the theory of a common origin for all humankind was one that had long been a topic of speculation amongst European scholars and theologians, certainly for some centuries before the eighteenth century, and it was, once more, derived from a literal reading of the Bible. Prior to the building of the Tower of Babel as detailed in Genesis 11:1–9, in the Garden of Eden the human race was believed to have spoken the same language, a direct correlation being made between a unified common language—assumed to be Hebrew¹¹—and a unified common race of people.

⁹ See also Godfrey 1967 and Arlotto 1969.

¹⁰ See Bryant 2001:14–16; Trautmann 1997:30–31; Schwab 1984:33–34; 149–51. Despite the varied conclusions of these earlier scholars, Jones largely succeeded, at least initially, in staving off challenges to biblical truth, effectively ensuring, as Trautmann notes, that 'the new admiration for Hinduism would reinforce Christianity and not work for its overthrow' (1997:74).

¹¹ Augustine (354–430), for example, had favoured the idea that Hebrew was the original human language in his *City of God* (XVI:11, 1, 222) although Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330–394) disagreed, as did Theoderet of Cyrrhus (c. 393–466), insisting instead that it was more likely to have been Syriac (Olender 1992:1). The subsequent diversification of languages was seen to have led to the scattering of people throughout the world. See also Bryant 2001:16; Schwab 1984:168–170.

II. *The Sons of Noah and Biblical Ethnology*

It was during the Renaissance that the debate regarding the original 'paradisiacal' or 'Edenic' language had first become a matter of intense scholarly interest, with numerous, and quite far-fetched claims being made by people who wished to assert their own ancestors' language as the language of Eden, although these attempts were often met with scepticism and derision. For example, in 1688 the Swedish scholar Andreas Kempe (1622–1689) published his satirical tract, *The Languages of Paradise*, in Hamburg in which he noted the farcical aspects of the contest to populate Eden with a variety of native tongues. After discussing the learned works of his compatriots Georg Stiernhielm (1598–1672) and Olaus Rudbeck (1630–1702), Kempe told how 'the voluptuous Eve' conspired with a beguiling satanic serpent speaking French. Maurice Olender amusingly describes Kempe's caricature as featuring, 'besides the francophone serpent, a Danish-speaking Adam and a Swedish-speaking God' (1992:2).

An exemplary case of this widespread European tendency towards partisan linguistic speculation is clear in the writings of the Flemish physician Jan van Gorp or Geropius Becanus (1518–1572), published as *Origines Antwerpianae* in 1569 (see Metcalf 1974:233–257 and Grafton 1991:99–101). As Olender argues, for Becanus, working in a context of tensions between Catholics and Protestants as well as one where the languages of French and Spanish were privileged over Flemish and Dutch in the Low Countries, his promotion of early Flemish as the original language was intended as a form of resistance. Becanus affirmed 'Cimbrian', the ancestor of Dutch, as 'the primordial language from which Hebrew derived' through a tortuous series of speculative etymologies, associating Gomer, Japheth's first son with Cimbri and the Cimmerians (1994:13).¹² Here Becanus draws a relationship between Flemish and Mosaic ethnology and linguistic speculation, and he used it to secure a place for Flemish as the *primogenia* with the concomitant demotion of Hebrew as a later, less transparent language.

After Becanus, the use of etymological proofs became a standard mode of argumentation for establishing the non-oriental, that is, non-Semitic, dimensions of the origins of Europe.¹³ Later linguistic scholars generally dismissed Becanus' clearly

¹² See Olender 1994:13–17 for a discussion of Becanus' etymological logic.

¹³ It is instructive to reflect on the term 'etymology', the study of word-origins, in order to understand how it is and was considered, most certainly during the Renaissance, to be the most straightforward and reliable method for tracing the origins of words, and therefore to offer insight into their 'true' or at least essential, meaning: origin signified essence which signified truth. The

partisan position, retaining Hebrew as the source of biblical revelation and as the first language of human thought, but they began to insist, by deriving European ancestry from Japheth, on a unique and important role for European languages (Olender 1994:16). As Olender contends, 'by playing with words, Becanus contributed to the formation of a mode of lexical manipulation which gave rise to new forms of linguistic comparativism' (*ibid.*); this was to prove influential on a number of later linguists and philosophers such as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716).

One further example of speculative linguistic bias is that of Adriaen van Sctieck (*fl.* 1614), a Belgian scholar, who argued that while Hebrew was in all likelihood the original language, the *lingua laphetica* was a 'neighbor language', emerging swiftly after the Babelian dispersion with the same transparent features as 'Adamic speech' and was therefore a 'second' mother tongue, grouped as 'Scythian, Celtic, Teutonic, Belgian, Danish, and northern' (Olender 1994:16). He proposed that the people (the Scythians) who spoke this language had occupied all of Europe as a result of their migratory excursions and he derived what was a patently fabricated etymology for the word 'Europe' from his creative imagining of their migratory 'cries': *over, op, an* ('over, on, toward') which he translated as '*oultre, plus oultre*' ('farther, farther still'). These calls mutate, in van Sctieck's work, to become *euver-op, uber-op, over-op* and finally, *europ*. Thus he is able to conclude that 'Europe is a Belgian and virile name' (1994:17).

English term 'etymology' is derived from the French *étymologie* which is a borrowing of the Latin *etymologia*, which in turn is borrowed from the Greek *etumologia*, a compound of *etumos* meaning 'true' or 'real' and *logos* meaning 'word' or 'speech act'. In this way 'etymology' (as a term, but also as a practice) refers to its own origin, thus its truthful nature: its rhetorical circularity is revealed in the promotion of etymology as the original truth of a term which can then be wielded to derive an origin which in its very nature as an origin (as essence) is considered to be more truthful than later variations. According to Marian Rothstein, during the Renaissance 'the identifiable (or identified) source of a thing was generally taken as a principle defining the way it was to be understood and classified. Sources, origins, were thus perceived as guides to how a thing was to be regarded and how it could be expected to perform' (1990:333). She further suggests that the prevalence of writings on the moment of Creation (within a biblical frame) within a large number of Renaissance texts, along with a broader preoccupation with the origins of things, peoples, languages, and so on, indicates a concern for retrieving a 'principle of coherence without, for all that, being a limiting force pulling backward toward an authorizing source or imposing a closed system....Inasmuch as they remain active, origins are a potential source of energy available to texts, institutions, things, or people; inasmuch as they are transmissible, origins are empowering' (1990:346). Another important aspect of etymology therefore is the sense in which it purports to retrieve and preserve the source, securing it for the present, and thus appropriating its quality of truth and its authority, one that has important implications for the qualities of truth and legitimacy that origins in general are believed to offer. It is ironic, of course, to seek an etymology for 'etymology' in order to demonstrate its essential meaning. The search for the essential truth through recourse to an origin is a theme to which I will return in detail Chapters 8 and 9, and one which is a central preoccupation of this thesis. See also Slaughter 1992.

The ‘Scythian hypothesis’ in its assertion of an original linguistic community for Europe on a par with Hebrew held sway for several generations of scholars,¹⁴ but after Jones’ announcement of the lexicographical affiliations between the languages of Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit, the focus shifted to the theorisation of what became known as the ‘Indo-European hypothesis’.¹⁵ The hypothesis was thought to provide a scientifically authoritative means—given the promotion of philology as a ‘science’, predicated on its forms of analysis, ability to provide objective ‘proofs’ of linguistic interrelationship, and appropriation of botanical metaphors—for explaining the origins and evolution of European languages without recourse to Hebrew. Before I discuss in more detail the development of the Indo-European hypothesis I would note here that, in spite of Jones’ dedication to the truth of biblical narratives, deist ideas and the anti-clericalism of the Enlightenment received new impetus from Jones’ work. The ancient religion of the Sanskrit Vedas seemed to suggest religious and ritual forms that conformed to a pure and untainted natural religion, on a par with, if not better than, Hebraic monotheism. In the light of Jones’ discovery it therefore seemed increasingly implausible—and undesirable—that the European languages were derived from Hebrew or that the Jewish religion was unique in its divine provenance. Thus, as Olender has suggested, ‘[b]y the eighteenth century...all the preconditions were present for a discovery that the ancestors of the Europeans, like the common ancestor of their languages, had been independent of Semitic influence’ (1994:5).

As I have shown, the prerequisites for the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century enthusiasm for linguistic and racial origins (and the consequent conflation of race and language) were being set in place for a long time prior to Jones’ discovery, and the further combination of deist musings on natural religion and the Enlightenment

¹⁴ There were a few detractors who tried to demonstrate the fundamental kinship of French and Hebrew. See Olender 1994:18–19.

¹⁵ Although the term ‘Indo-European’ was only coined in 1816 by the linguist Thomas Young (1773–1829), the debate regarding what to call the original language raged from the date of Jones’ announcement onwards (Bryant 2001:20). A number of nomenclatures were suggested, among them ‘European’, ‘Sarmatian’ and—unsurprisingly—‘Japhetic’, but it was ‘Indo-European’ that eventually won the day. In Germany, the preference was for ‘Indo-German’, first suggested by the Danish geographer Conrad Malte-Brun (1755–1826) in 1810 and then promoted on a larger scale by the German orientalist Julius Klaproth (1783–1835) in 1823. Justification for the adoption of the term ‘Indo-German’ was offered, as Bryant notes, ‘on the grounds that these two languages encapsulated the entire Indo-European-speaking area—the farthest language to the east being Indic, and to the west, Germanic’ (Bryant 2001:20). Although the adoption of ‘Indo-German’ was resisted by non-German scholars and Franz Bopp also objected to its use on the grounds that ‘Indo-European’ was more politically neutral and less partisan, it still continues to be used amongst some scholars in Germany today (*ibid.*). I will trace the popularity of the term ‘Indo-German’ in Chapter 7.

rejection of biblical veracity—in spite of Jones’ insistence on the Sanskritic confirmation of key biblical narratives—ensured an eventually definitive break with both biblical chronology and the consequent need to assert any direct line of inheritance with the Jewish tradition. The Indo-European theories of linguistic origins nonetheless took a common source for granted because it confirmed theories of natural religion.

Two connected discourses of differentiation are apparent here: firstly, the desire of earlier *philosophes* such as Voltaire was to draw a clear-cut and final distinction between history (as formulated in his Enlightenment vision of the origin of universal history in the Far East or India) and myth (as represented by the erroneous version of providential history provided by the Bible, particularly as it pertained to Edenic origins), and Jones’ discovery reinforced this difference; secondly, a growing distinction emerged between the European races, who could now source their Japhethic origins as Asiatic or ‘Indo-European’, and those of Semitic origin. The displacement of Semitic origins from their previously privileged position served as a prerequisite for the proposal and valorisation of Indo-European origins as well as the reassertion of Enlightenment scepticism towards mythical narratives such as those found in the Bible. In both cases, however, as I have shown this drive to determine the identity and nature of the first language of humanity—the origin—was nonetheless rooted in the biblical or ‘Semitic’ tradition of Edenic origins. While the situation was contradictory, as Olender observes, it nonetheless

represented the culmination of a historiographical effort of aiming to discover for itself splendid ancestors in an East purged of all Semitism; [philologists] favored the idea of a West superior to all other civilizations, but were nonetheless able to identify themselves with the actors of a providential history whose rules were decreed, once and for all, by biblical revelation.

(1974:22)

III. Language and Homeland: The Indo-European Hypothesis

Progress in Indo-European linguistics, post-Jones, was so rapid that nineteenth-century comparative philologists increasingly believed that the identification of the source of the Indo-European family of languages (*Ursprache*: ‘original’ or ‘first language’ which was designated as ‘Proto-Indo-European’) would be possible, unlike the more cautious Jones who had refrained from asserting its identity with too much certainty, (1807:34). The optimism of these comparativists was sanctioned initially by an unquestioning appeal to

a family tree model (*Stammbaum*),¹⁶ which assumed monogenetic origin, through the assertion of a direct analogy with the taxonomic schema of botanists and, after the mid-nineteenth century, with Charles Darwin's theories of the evolution of species. Trautmann suggests, correctly in my view, that the adoption of the *Stammbaum* analogy was a way for linguists to sidestep the biblical basis of their concern with linguistic origins (1997:57).

Foucault's concept of the *épistémé* is useful here for understanding the recourse to botanical metaphor as a familiar and frequently employed trope for tracing the 'order of things' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Didier Eribon describes Foucault's notion of *épistémé* as follows:

every period is characterised by an underground configuration that delineates its culture, a grid of knowledge making possible every scientific discourse, every production of statements....Each science develops within the framework of an *épistémé*, and therefore is linked in part with other sciences contemporary with it.
(1991:158)

Thus, for Foucault, the conceptual frameworks, assumptions, and methods within certain fields of knowledge during the Classical period, which he defines roughly from the mid-seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century (1970:xxii), shared ways of thinking and organised their knowledge relations around a series of 'similitudes' (*convenientia, aemulatio, analogy, and sympathy*; 1970:17–25):

it was resemblance that largely guided exegesis and the interpretation of texts; it was resemblance that organised the play of symbols, made possible knowledge of things visible and invisible and controlled the art of representing them. The universe was folded in upon itself: the earth echoing the sky, faces seeing themselves reflected in the stars, and plants holding within their stems secrets that were of use to man. Painting imitated space. And representation...was positioned as a form of repetition; the theatre of life or the mirror of nature, that was the claim made of all languages, its manner of declaring its existence and of formulating its right of speech.
(1970:17)

¹⁶ August Schleicher (1821–1868) formalised this tree model in 1861, tracing family relationships between the Iranian languages, Greek, Albanian, and the Celtic, Italic, Balto-Slavic, and Germanic languages. As Trautmann notes, 'Relations of near and far are calibrated by the branching structures of the family tree, and the whole expresses a conception of the progressive differentiation and radiation across Eurasia of languages from a common ancestral language [Proto-Indo-European]' (1997:6–7). The Indo-European language group was contrasted to other language groups, nominated as Semitic (including Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, and Amharic) and Hamitic (the languages of North Africa). It was suggested that these language groups once had a remote common source, and that Proto-Indo-European was merely the origin for all subsequent variants within the Indo-European language group. Friedrich Schlegel, whose philological work I will discuss in Chapter 7, also used a botanical metaphor, to distinguish between inflected and agglutinative languages. See Trautmann 1997:7–11 for an important discussion regarding the significance of the adoption of this model, not just for linguistic comparativism, but also for ethnology and biology in the nineteenth century.

While Foucault refers here to a period prior to that which is my concern in this chapter, he does offer a way of understanding the dispersal of the botanical metaphor throughout apparently disparate knowledge productions as rooted in a shared *épistémé*; certain shared presuppositions and models serve not only to organise thought, representation, and categorisation, but also delineate what it is possible to think and how. Foucault is at pains, however, to stress the absence of conscious intentionality in this process: ‘unknown to themselves, the naturalists, economists and grammarians, employed the same rules to define the objects proper to their own study’ (1970:xi). Further, he does not want to establish his concept of the *épistémé* as marking a teleological, unified framework such as might be understood from the term *Zeitgeist* (‘spirit of the age’): ‘I do not seek to detect, starting from diverse signs, the unitary spirit of an epoch...a kind of *Weltanschauung*....[Rather] I have collated different discourses and described their clusters and relations’ (1991a:55).

Thus, Foucault’s concept of an *épistémé* does not describe a unified body of ideas—or hegemonic worldview—but a set of conflicting discursive frameworks and pressures which operate and interact with each other across a social body, and which condition how people think, know, and write. The particular selection of the family tree model as a reigning metaphor, however, is worth reflecting on further because it was used with such striking regularity to establish systemic knowledge about disparate phenomena like languages, plant species, people groups, and economic units and processes. My own view is that it simultaneously represented a seemingly natural confirmation (with an implication, therefore, of truthfulness) of the obscured genealogical presuppositions of biblical ethnology and, perhaps more opaquely, produced those very presuppositions. The tree model offered a consoling, or at least logically derived, depiction of unity, *a single point of origin*. It seemed that the very order of nature confirmed the monologic origin of everything under scrutiny. Here I would also like to note the patriarchal utility—and texture—of the model. As I will argue in Chapter 8, the assertion of a singular origin is the fundamental cornerstone of patrilineal ontology within the history of Western metaphysics.

Nevertheless, the linguists’ appropriation of the natural sciences to support their linguistic comparativism was also based on the reasonable theory that carefully measured resemblances and differences between the various Indo-European languages could indicate incidents of separation from their common origin. Comparative philologists were convinced that the identification of cognate terms in a significant

number of branches of the Indo-European family, and the consequent extrapolation, following the laws of sound change, of a standard form, could generate a protollexicon.¹⁷ Moreover, underlying this claim was the highly speculative assertion that the growth of each ‘branch’ (each separate language) out of the ‘trunk’ (the lost *Ursprache*) signified the movement of a people group into a new territory. Linked to the widespread curiosity about the original language of the first humans, therefore, was a related preoccupation with the geographical location of the *Urheimat*. Thus with the consolidation of the notion of a Proto-Indo-European language—the *Ursprache*—the hunt was on, not just for the *Urheimat*, but also for the first people, or *Urvolk*, who spoke this ancestral tongue. Shared language groupings were correlated with shared geography,¹⁸ which in turn, as I will show in Chapter 7, was correlated with race.

As I observed earlier, Jones had initially suggested that the events detailed in Genesis 11—the building of the Tower of Babel and subsequent dispersal of humankind into many different language groupings—had taken place between the Caucasus and Persia. Jones did so on the basis of his belief, discussed above, that ‘the Hebrew narrative is more than human in its origin and consequently true in every substantial part of it’ and it was therefore ‘...no longer probable only, but absolutely certain, that the whole race of man proceeded from Iran whence they migrated at first in three great colonies [those of Ham, Shem, and Japheth];...those three branches grew from a common stock’ (1792:468–487). What is notable about these statements is the way in which Jones, in detailing his ethnological panorama, establishes what became basic philological principles (those of root and branch).

In any case the quest for the original homeland soon became a central preoccupation for scholars throughout Europe, particularly those influenced by the romantic formula of the past as a golden age and its coincidence with nascent nationalist movements (as I will discuss in the next chapter). Jones’ discovery provoked a surge of interest in the culture of India, leading, in Britain, to a short period of what Trautmann

¹⁷ It was this idea that was taken up later by the philologist Adolphe Pictet (1799–1875) who developed a methodology for ‘linguistic palaeontology’ that could derive such a protollexicon. The essence of Pictet’s approach was to identify shared cognate words found in all branches of a language family that specified elements of material or social culture, such as ‘wheel’ or ‘horse’, which could be used as lexicographical evidence to prove that these items existed in the protoculture of that family. It was thus considered possible not only to establish the rough outlines of the original language, but also to identify the geographical location of the people who used this language. Pictet himself suggested that his mode of analysis pointed to an original homeland in Bactria (present-day Afghanistan). See Bryant 2001:34.

¹⁸ Inevitably these geographical speculations also replicated the Mosaic narrative of the dispersion of humankind after Noah, generated from his three sons, and from the Tower of Babel.

refers to as 'Indomania' (1997:62–98; see below). India soon displaced modern-day Iran (or Armenia) as the location of choice for the original homeland of the Indo-European race in large part due to Jones' discovery, alongside the consequent assumption of racial consanguinity. It was not a particularly new idea: Voltaire had earlier posited India as the cradle of civilisation, supported by Jean-Sylvain Bailly (1736–1793) who had suggested as early as 1777 that the earliest humans had come from the banks of the river Ganges: 'the Brahmans are the teachers of Pythagoras, the instructors of Greece, and through her of the whole of Europe (1777:51). It consequently became the fashion amongst some European intellectuals (see Bryant 2001:18–19) to assert India as the site of the first human race and, in the aftermath of Jones' discovery, it was a position that initially appeared to have a strong foundation.¹⁹ It seemed reasonable at the time to locate the original homeland in the area that had originated what was considered the oldest language of the group of related languages.

Trautmann shows how, until the early part of the nineteenth century, British Orientalists were generally very enthusiastic about the discovery of the kinship between Sanskrit and English (via Latin and Greek) for a number of reasons: the translation of Sanskrit texts seemed to indicate independent verification of biblical historiography as I have already shown; the Indian religious complex as represented in its earliest texts appeared to have preserved the primitive truth of natural religion from which the paganism of Rome and Greece seemed to have been derived; and this kinship between Sanskrit and European languages displaced Semitic religion from its previously hegemonic status, thus relieving Europeans from having to derive their traditions from what was now apparently an alien culture (1997:64). A further reason was related to the means through which the governance of the Indian territories could be best achieved (Trautmann 1997:17). Henry Sumner Maine, for example, suggested 'that the

¹⁹ This was largely because early philologists, unlike Jones, tended to treat Vedic Sanskrit as almost identical to, if not actually the same as, the original Proto-Indo-European due to the antiquity of its textual sources, cultural references, the structure of its grammar, and the extent of its vocabulary. Linguists of the late eighteenth century believed that Sanskrit showed more structural regularity than its cognate languages which, in keeping with the romantic view of cultural degeneration from an original point of perfection, indicated that it was more original than, for example, Greek and the other cognate languages. It was a view lent some support by the developmental view of language theorised in 1689 by John Locke in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1975:433). According to Locke, 'civilised' languages were regular in structure and possessed a sophisticated and extensive vocabulary. This was one of the reasons why Jones could assert that Sanskrit was a civilised language (1807, III:34). Friedrich Schlegel, whose work I will examine in this regard in Chapter 7, also suggested, on similar grounds, that 'the Indian language is older, the others younger and derived from it' (in Bryant 2001:19). See also Trautmann 1992a:210–211.

government of India by the English has been rendered appreciably easier by the discoveries which have brought home to the educated of both races the common...parentage of Englishman and Hindoo' (in Trautmann 1997:18–19). The assertion of racial kinship through shared linguistic origins was certainly one way of justifying colonial expansion while pretending that it was a matter of mutual exchange: where India had once apparently bequeathed Europe its cultural richness, Britain was now repaying its debt by a triumphant return to the homeland, bringing with it the benefits of European civilisation to its distant kin (Bryant 2001:26). Trautmann warns, therefore, against seeing the promotion of Indo-British kinship as having any *material* substance: 'British Orientalists devised a theory of their own activities...that involved *claims* about promoting affection between ruler and ruled and a political *rhetoric* of love' (1997:18).

By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the tide turned and in the place of British enthusiasm for India a virulent 'Indophobia' emerged (Trautmann 1997:99–130), again connected to colonial exigencies and related to the events of the Indian Mutiny (1857). In 1858, as a direct result of the Mutiny, the British sent the last Mughal Emperor into exile in Burma, thus bringing to an end just over three centuries of Mughal rule, and at the same time abolished the British East India Company, replacing it with the direct rule, under the British Crown, of India. As Dilip Chakrabarti, suggests 'With the Raj firmly established it was the time to begin to visualize the history and cultural process of India as a series of invasions and foreign rules' (1976:67). This meant that the notion of India as the cradle of civilisation was rejected in favour of an origin elsewhere, probably Central Asia, and that Sanskritic traditions were now considered to be depraved corruptions of an original natural religion which they had previously been held to embody. Trautmann lays the blame for this shift on Charles Grant (1746–1823), whose influential 'Observations on the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain' (1796) dismissed any notion of Indian civilisation and made a case for an aggressive policy of Anglicisation in the service of colonial governance. In the aftermath of the Mutiny the idea gained popularity and a good deal of literature depicted contemporary Indians as degenerate, corrupt, and inferior to the British in every respect.²⁰

²⁰ See Leopold 1974 for a survey of the literature in this period. She suggests that British colonialists oscillated between progressive and cyclical theories of Indo-European consanguinity both of which provided justifications for the extension and formalisation of British colonial rule in the period following the Mutiny. While both theories acknowledged Indo-European ancestry for the British and the northern Indians—Brahmins in particular—progressive ideology, drawing on

This was in marked contrast to the policy of respect and—albeit limited—mutuality cultivated by the earlier British orientalists. A more ‘romantic’ orientalist view did persist amongst some scholars but they were in the minority, most notably Max Müller (1823–1900), a German scholar resident in England, who suggested a common descent for Indians and the British drawn from philological evidence, and who characterised this commonality in terms of racial equality while acknowledging British resistance to the idea (1854a:29–30). It was a view that was treated with a great deal of distaste by some nineteenth-century British scholars and Müller was excoriated for his insistence on racial consanguinity between the British and Indians (see, for example, Legge 1902:710). As Bryant notes, ‘colonial sensibilities made [the British] reluctant to acknowledge any potential cultural indebtedness to the forefathers of the rickshaw pullers of Calcutta and...[they] preferred to hang on to the biblical Adam for longer than their European contemporaries’ (2001:22). Trautmann (1997:165–189) attributes the downfall of an Indian *Urheimat* to the rise of race science,²¹ particularly insofar as it offered a welcome resolution to the dilemma posed by Jones’ discovery (see also Bryant 2001:24–29). The challenge by race science to the notion that India was the original homeland was assisted by the discovery that South Indian languages, referred to as ‘Dravidian’, were not derived from Sanskrit (Bryant 2001:25), and led to the emergence of what became known as the ‘Aryan invasion theory’.²²

evolutionary theories of both a Lamarckian and Darwinian tenor, stressed the idea that the condition of contemporary Indians was one of arrested development, and that the early Indian Aryans had ceased to evolve to the extent that Europeans had for a variety of reasons. It was the responsibility of the British, therefore, to ensure that India received ‘not only new Aryan legal, administrative, social and commercial institutions but also a new religion and the Aryan idea of “progress” and of “history”, which...it had not developed by itself’ (Leopold 1974:599). The cyclical view, characterised by scholars like Max Müller, promoted colonial rule as a kind of ‘family reunion’. An advocate of this point of view was Frederic William Farrar (1831–1903), who suggested that ‘After a separation of 4,000 years, after having traversed an immense circle of the globe, the younger Aryan returns...not solely to rule over the elder...but to teach him...the lessons of a superior wisdom, a purer justice, and a loftier morality—above all, to teach him...Christianity fostered by the Western Aryan peoples’ (1870:144). See also Laing 1862:21.

²¹ Trautmann argues that the development of comparative philology and ethnology or race science in the nineteenth century ran along parallel and then divergent tracks, although ethnology was initially reliant on philology for its organisational schema, particularly its principles of linguistic categorisation (1997:133–134). See also Stepan (1982) who coined the term ‘race science’ to account for the relationship of ethnology to comparative philology. I will discuss shortly the conflation of the Indo-European hypothesis with notions of the consanguinity of the ‘Aryan’ race.

²² Max Müller is credited with coining the term ‘Aryan’ to refer to the Indo-European family of languages and to its related people groups and with popularising the Aryan invasion theory, although it was in fact the ethnologist James Cowles Prichard (1786–1848) who was one of the first to use it to refer to the racial origins of the Indo-European tribes who were thought by this time to have invaded not only Iran and North India but also Europe (see Prichard 1843). See Trautmann 1997:172–178 for a discussion of Müller’s career as a comparative philologist and proponent of the

In broad outline, as formulated in the nineteenth century, the theory postulated that a race of nomadic warriors known as the Aryans, originating in the Caucasus mountains in Southeastern Europe, invaded Iran and northern India roughly between 2000 and 1500 BCE, the latter being the date favoured by Müller.²³ These invaders were thought to have entered the Indian subcontinent from the mountain passes of the Hindu Kush, bringing with them the domesticated horse and the Vedic religion. This Aryan race either displaced or assimilated the indigenous pre-Aryan peoples, many of whom migrated to the south, with those remaining being relegated to the lower castes of post-Vedic society. The victory of the Aryans was believed to have been rapid and total, resulting in the dominance of Aryan culture and language over the northern part of the subcontinent and in the extension of considerable influence to parts of the south. The initial theory was assembled primarily on linguistic grounds, although these grounds themselves were based on a questionable reading of excerpts from the Vedic corpus and concerned the translation of the term *‘ārya’*²⁴ and its apparent opposites *‘an-ārya’*, *‘dasyu’*, and *‘dāsa’*. The anglicised term ‘Aryan’, erroneously derived from *‘ārya’* to indicate racial origins, was used interchangeably with ‘Indo-European’ or ‘Indo-Germanic’ particularly towards the end of the nineteenth century. I will return to discuss the use of the term ‘Aryan’ to indicate racial affiliation in Chapter 7.

Within the Vedic texts there is no mention of an actual invasion or migration into India, nor is there any reference to a homeland outside of India or any clear references to race or racial appearance. Nonetheless, in nineteenth-century Europe the term ‘Aryan’ was widely employed to produce images of the Indo-Europeans as fair-skinned and dolichocephalic. ‘Dolichocephalic’ was a term invented by the German race scientist Andreas Retzius (1796–1860) to denote long and narrow skulls as opposed to those which are brachycephalic, or broad and short. Dolichocephaly, according to

Aryan invasion theory. This controversial theory is still debated in Indological circles today; see Bryant 1999; Bryant and Patton 2005; Sethna 1992; Schaffer 1984. See Thapar 2000:1108–1140; Guha 1998:430–433 for discussions of the contemporary Indian nationalist challenge to the Aryan invasion theory.

²³ Navaratna Rajaram (1995:91–96) argues that Müller arrived at this dating due to a literal reading of the Bible, particularly as it concerned ethnology.

²⁴ The entry for *ārya* in Monier Williams’ *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (1899) appears thus: ‘a respectable or honourable or faithful man and inhabitant of Aryavarta; one who is faithful to the religion of that country; name of the race that immigrated from Central Asia into Aryavarta; ...someone behaving like an Aryan, worthy of one, honourable, respectable, noble, of a good family; excellent; wise; suitable....’. (*Aryavarta* here refers to northern India; see Manu 2005, II.21–22. However, early European readers of the Vedas assumed that terms *‘ārya’* and *‘dāsa’* referred to races of people rather than being simply markers of relative status. See also Trautmann 1997:12–13.

Retzius, was the distinctive feature of the earliest inhabitants of Europe.²⁵ The importance of craniology for proponents of the Aryan invasion theory was that because the skulls of Europeans were different from those of the Asian Indo-Europeans, it was possible that Europeans were either indigenous to Europe or had migrated there from a central location (probably Central Asia) and that it had thus been they who had taken Indo-European civilisation to India. As Bryant argues,

What the racial theorists succeeded in doing...was to uncouple the common language bond from the need to identify with the Hindus on any level whatsoever. The Europeans, as a race, were now not required to acknowledge any common racial or even cultural bond with the Hindus....Even the common Indo-European language was presented as being a gift to India from the West....The racial theorists paved the way for the postulate that the Aryans were an autonomous white race who brought civilization and the Sanskrit language to the different races of India.
(2001:25–26)

This reversal of the Indo-European hypothesis provided succour to those who wished to deny an Indian homeland for the European Aryan race. The usefulness of the idea for supporting the ideology of British colonialism as a civilising mission is obvious: not only did it relieve the British of having to accept kinship with native Indians, it enabled them to represent themselves, in Bryant's words, as 'a second wave of Aryans, again bringing a superior language and civilization to the racial descendants of the same natives their forefathers had attempted to elevate so many centuries earlier' (2001:26),²⁶ and further, to justify their presence in the subcontinent by building up a picture of the Indians as degenerate and corrupt (see Bryant 2001:26–27). Racial science provided an easy explanation for Aryan Indian regression by suggesting it was a result of miscegenation with the darker race of *dāsas*. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, therefore, few British scholars were willing to consider India to be the homeland of the Indo-Europeans, or to tolerate claims regarding any kind of kinship (see Müller 1895, I:63–64, 66; II:20; 1847:348; Trautmann 1997:174–175). Bryant argues that this was one of the reasons why Indology was generally neglected in Britain compared to Germany and France (2001:28–29), although Sheldon Pollock suggests that many of the preoccupations

²⁵ The classification of crania was an aspect of nineteenth-century phrenology, a pseudo-science concerned with character analysis based on the theory that the human mind could be divided into thirty-seven faculties each with a distinct location in the brain. Although initially framed as a key to understanding individual psychology, the phrenological system soon became applied as a theory of racial difference. See Gould 1981, Cooter 1985, and Egerton 1995.

²⁶ Max Müller certainly cast the British 'civilising mission' in these terms when he suggested that 'it is curious to see how the [English] descendants of the same race, to which the first conquerors and masters of India belonged, return, after having followed the northern development of the Japhetic race to their primordial soil, to accomplish the glorious work of civilization, which had been left unfinished by their Arian brethren'(1847:349)

of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century German discourse on Indo-European racial and linguistic origins were possibly bequeathed by the earlier eighteenth-century 'sympathetic' British orientalism (1993:83), a point to which I will return in Chapter 7.

Although race science quickly achieved a position of pre-eminence in the European preoccupation with its origins, comparative philology continued to make its mark in the debate. The German philologist Franz Bopp (1791–1867) demonstrated that Sanskrit itself was derived from an earlier tongue and he stated that he did not

believe that Greek, Latin, and other European languages are to be considered as derived from the Sanskrit....I feel rather inclined to consider them altogether as subsequent variations of one original tongue, which, however, the Sanskrit has preserved more perfect than its kindred dialects.

(in Bryant 2001:19)

Bopp's proposal thus further contributed to what became the wholesale rejection, at least initially outside of Germany, of India as the *Urheimat*. By the end of the nineteenth century the notion that India had been the original homeland was almost entirely discredited and a European homeland was, in some circles, established in its place, a development I discuss in Chapter 7.

Regardless of the competing claims over the location of the original homeland, the concept of the *Urheimat* as articulated by Herder, Jones, and others gave a sense of urgency to German speculations regarding the *Urvolk* and the *Ursprache* in a way that was markedly different to other European countries, particularly Britain. It fuelled a nostalgia for origins that became enmeshed in the politics of German identity and nationalism from the early nineteenth century onwards. Furthermore, it provided fertile ground for a renewed articulation of anti-Semitism built upon a discourse of differentiation that separated the European Aryans from the Semitic Jews. I will examine the consolidation of this particular discourse of differentiation in the context of German romanticism and nationalism in Chapter 7. However, the roots of this discourse lie in the nascent nationalism of nineteenth-century Germany which is my concern in the following chapter and it is there that all the narrative threads of the search for German identity and the wider preoccupation with origins in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, presented so far, will begin to come together. The German discovery of, and enthusiasm for, Tacitus' portrayal of the ancient Germanic tribes and their hero Arminius, Herder's promotion of *Völkisch* narrative as an authentic source for securing national identity, the broader European theorisation of the original language and homeland, the consequent break with Hebraic genealogy, and the deist influence on notions of natural religion and the original state of humanity all combined, in the

German context of romantic and nationalist discourse, to produce a definitive discursive differentiation between Aryans and Semites upon which Germanic cultural—if not immediately political—unification could be conceived and enacted.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEORIES OF NATIONALISM AND THE BACKGROUND TO GERMAN ROMANTIC NATIONALISM

In the historical context of the derogation of German identity outlined earlier in Chapter 2, there could hardly have been a more timely argument for the primacy of German language and culture than Jones' Indo-European hypothesis. I earlier argued that the formulation of a stable and unified German identity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a matter of increasing urgency, precipitated by the Revolutionary Wars (1792–1802) and an expansive French ideological imperialism, but with much longer antecedents in the context of the Holy Roman Empire's resistance to papal hegemony. The fifteenth-century discovery of Tacitus' writings on the ancient Germans by the German humanists provided a primary source for asserting a noble pedigree in parity with the Graeco-Roman legacy of other European nations. Moreover, it served as a template of autochthonous Germanic virtues and racial purity; when affiliated with the Indo-European hypothesis it gained additional legitimacy as I will return to show in Chapter 7. The assertion of this ancient pedigree was given further support by Herder's theories regarding the function of indigenous languages and myths in forming and preserving the essential and authentic characteristics of the *Volk*: Germany was thus charged, by Herder, with seeking its past—and future—in its vernacular literary and oral traditions and in its landscape in order to cultivate a sense of its own prestige and nobility. It was in the nineteenth century that a concerted effort of retrieval began and it was one that was closely tied to an emergent nationalist project—the result of French aggression—that sought the unification of the diverse German territories on the basis of shared cultural traditions and to romanticism as an ideology of cultural regeneration.

In this chapter, therefore, I am mainly concerned with examining the emergence of nationalist sentiment in nineteenth-century Germany and its very close relationship to the work of scholars within the German romantic movement. I begin the chapter in section I by surveying a variety of frameworks suggested by contemporary scholars of nationalism in order to derive a model in which to understand German nationalism as a predominantly cultural phenomenon and to examine the ways in which ideas about

gender, race, and class were connected to its vision of the form that the unified nation was to take. I then discuss in section II how German nationalism in this period was oriented towards the retrieval of Germany's noble origins—characterised as a golden age of German achievement—as a means of ameliorating the turmoil that resulted from aggressive French expansion into the German territories in the early years of the nineteenth century. The growth of German nationalism during this period, and its questions regarding the intrinsic characteristics of Germanic identity, assumed a heuristic cogency when combined with German nationalist resistance against French imperialism in the aftermath of the Napoleonic invasions (1803–1812), surveyed briefly below, and with a nascent romantic programme of cultural regeneration. In section III of this chapter, therefore, I will sketch the romantic movement as it developed in Germany during the same period and trace its decisive role in shaping the direction of the growing nationalist movement towards an initially aesthetic, and then political formulation of German identity. In section IV I examine an important early strand of romantic thought—synthesis—that prompted a call for a national mythology based on aesthetic principles of fusion. This 'new mythology' was part of a nationalist agenda concerned with uniting the German people under a banner of shared cultural traditions. Myth in this context was seen to be the unificatory medium through which the Germans would be recalled to their glorious past and which would ensure an equally glorious future. The purpose of the chapter is thus twofold: (1) to situate German nationalism within a theoretical framework that can explain its emergence and form; and (2) to provide a historical background to the revival of folklore and myth that characterised German romantic nationalism throughout the nineteenth century which I then explore in the following two chapters.

I. Models of Nationalism

The origins and character of nationalism, and conceptions of what constitutes a nation state, have been characterised by scholars as having two main forms: civic/political or ethnic/cultural nationalism.¹ Civic nationalism has been associated with the constitution

¹ Anthony D. Smith and Hutchinson are the main theorists of ethnic nationalism and Gellner and Breuilly represent the civic view. David Brown prefers the term 'cultural' nationalism over 'ethnic' nationalism in order to avoid the 'biological connotations' that have been attached to the term 'ethnic' (1999:282) and Kearney uses the term 'ethno-cultural' for similar reasons (1997:1–22). Hutchinson distinguishes the two forms of nationalism as 'political' and 'cultural' (1994b:122). In my view his terminology is preferable as it demonstrates a broad appreciation of the ways in which 'ethnic' nationalism also invoked other forms of cultural unity either alongside or in

of the nation state on the basis of the social contract² where the possession of political and legal rights and duties both define individuals' membership of the nation and establish them as citizens of the state. Examples of the civic form of nationalism are Britain and France, both of which conceived of the nation as inevitably connected to concepts of state and government. Cultural nationalism, on the other hand, bases its nation-building efforts on the assumption of shared cultural traditions, a common inheritance from the past, and is essentially backward-looking, leading Nairn to characterise these two forms of nationalism as 'Janus-faced' (1997:67, 71–72).

Civic and cultural nationalisms are most obviously differentiated in terms of the way membership of a nation is construed and in the relationship of nation and state. Membership of a civic nation is achieved through political processes of assimilation whereas the cultural nation is conceived by its members as having a prior existence to the state where membership is unconditional and exclusive (Nieguth 1999:157–158; see also Guibernau 1996:3). According to Hutchinson, civic nationalists have as their ideal 'a civic *polity* of educated citizens united by common laws and mores like the *polis* of classical antiquity' whereas cultural nationalists 'reject the ideal of universal citizenship rights of political nationalism' and 'demand that the natural divisions within the nation—sexual, occupational, religious and regional—be respected, for the impulse to differentiation is the dynamo of national creativity' (1994:122). The most obvious example of cultural nationalism is the case of Germany in the nineteenth century, particularly as articulated by romantic intellectuals, which I will explore in more detail shortly. Here, Herder's conception of the *Volk* proved influential in suggesting that a nation was not a socio-political construct but was rather an organic concept that articulated the homogeneity and unity of the *Volk* connected through shared traditions, language, culture, religion, and myths.³ Towards the end of the nineteenth century,

contrast to the racial basis of collective unity in order to sanction its conception of the nation state. Civic and ethnic forms of nationalism have also been described as functionalist/modernist, where nations are seen to be the product, rather than the cause, of state-formation along civic lines (see Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1985; Nairn 1981), and primordialist/essentialist where nations are viewed as natural phenomena defined through an organic bond between people and territory (see Anthony D. Smith 1998). A third way that nationalisms have been distinguished is as either 'individualist' or 'collectivist', both of which mirror the distinction between civic and ethnic/cultural nationalisms (see Kohn 1960 and Greenfeld 1992).

² As such, the civic model is derived from Rousseau's notion of the 'social contract' (1947 [1762]) which ascribes primacy to the state with regard to the formation of nations: 'It is certain that nations are in the long run what the government makes them to be' (in Grimsley 1972:14).

³ The function of the state, in a Herderian frame, therefore, is to aid the natural evolution of the fundamental units of humanity—nations—without outside interference. Accordingly, primacy is

shared race was also included as a marker of national unity as I will discuss in Chapter 7.

However, the distinction between these two forms of nationalism are often less clear when examining individual nation-building efforts, at least in terms of their aims, and serves more to describe types of nationalism than to explain its appeal and success (or otherwise). There have thus been attempts either to circumvent the cultural/civic divide by extending the typology of nationalisms beyond these two models, or to seek a compromise where they coincide in the nation-building effort. Thus, Layoun proposes that all nationalism 'constructs and proffers a narrative of the "nation" and of its relation to an already or potential state' (1991:410–411). As such, nationalism is both a goal to achieve statehood (the civic model) and a belief in collective organic commonality (the cultural model). Nieguth, on the other hand, has found the terms 'civic' and 'cultural' too nebulous and has proposed instead their substitution with four 'irreducible organising principles' of nation states which he defines as territory, race, culture, and ancestry (1999:161, 169).⁴ Nonetheless, he merely ends up invoking, whilst albeit expanding, the vocabulary of civic and ethnic nationalisms. The narrative component of nation-building that Layoun identifies has led to a series of influential arguments regarding the operations of nationalism, suggesting that it involves 'imagining' a national past and present (Anderson 1991), inventing traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), and symbolically constructing community (Cohen 1985), and that it invokes essential myths to establish the legitimacy of the nation-state (A. Smith 1986; 1999b), suggesting, as Gellner argues, that 'it is nationalism that engenders nations, and not the other way round' (1983:49).

accorded to the nation over the state, where the geographical distribution of the nation defines the boundaries of the state.

⁴ Nieguth also draws attention to a tendency amongst some scholars of nationalism to privilege its civic form, seeing it as liberal and advanced and ethnic/cultural nationalism as retrogressive, illiberal, and conservative. One of the problems with the association of civic nationalism with liberalism and ethnic nationalism with illiberalism is that it has been wielded to differentiate between postcolonial nationalisms as ethnic and therefore retrogressive and belligerent, and European nationalism as civic and liberal, thus betraying a potentially orientalist attitude. Moreover, as Cusack points out, 'ethno-cultural nationalisms are pervasive and widespread, even at the heart of Western nations that consider themselves to be liberal democracies' (2000:543). See also Kearney 1997 and Sluga 1998. On the tendency amongst western scholars to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' nationalisms, see David Brown 1999 and Nieguth 1999.

(i) Primordialism, Instrumentalism, and Constructivism

Despite the apparent similarity of the 'imaginative' components of nationalist projects and the tenuous consensus regarding the typology of nationalism just described, there is a great deal of disagreement amongst scholars regarding the mechanisms through which it achieves its goals and cultivates nationalist sentiment. Scholarship in this area can be divided into three dominant approaches: instrumentalist, constructivist, and primordialist (Levinger and Lytle 2001:176; Dawisha 2002:3). Primordialism views national identity as immutable; it cannot be created or altered through social construction or through purposeful manipulation, but is rather a spiritual communion born out of a complex web of social structures that constitute a people's inherited perceptions, identities, and interests. Primordialists thus view the appeal of nationalism to be the result of already existing social and cultural connections which nationalism simply affirms. Anthony D. Smith's work has displayed primordialist tendencies, and he has suggested, against instrumentalism, for example, that the failed nation-building efforts of communist élites in Russia were an example of a cultural and primordial limitation on instrumentalist efforts to construct a new national referent (1992:47–48).

Instrumentalists, such as Gellner, Breuilly, Greenfeld, and Brass,⁵ in contrast, depict nationalism primarily as an instrument of social élites in the service of socio-economic development or state-building, and they emphasise the ways in which these élites manipulate the national idea in order to fulfil other objectives, such as the maintenance of their own position in a class hierarchy. For Gellner, therefore, nationalism emerged as a necessary tool for the creation of modern, industrialised nations. For him, nationalism is concerned with the 'organization of human groups into large, centrally educated, culturally homogenous units' which are a feature of the modern industrialist need for a large, literate, and mobile workforce with a built-in capacity for 'precise communication between strangers' (1983:33–5, 40). Breuilly presents a similar argument, defining nationalism as a 'form of politics' that is useful for the 'objective of obtaining and using state power'. Thus political movements which hope to gain control of the state require 'coordination, mobilisation, and legitimacy' and nationalism thus is a powerful tool for those purposes (1985:1–2). Paul Brass' instrumentalism leads him to claim that the study of ethnicity and nationality is 'in large part the study of politically-induced cultural change' that is, the analysis of a process 'by

⁵ Other scholars who follow an instrumentalist approach include Charles Tilly (1975; 1990), Eric Hobsbawm (1990), and Michael Mann (1995).

which élites and counterélites within ethnic groups select aspects of the group's culture, attach new value and meaning to them, and use them as symbols to mobilise the group, to defend its interests, and to compete with other groups' (1991:75). Élités in the instrumentalist view emphasise or invent particular traditions that they then endow as national in order to create the appearance of a people's historical continuity and to cement their collective identity (Greenfeld 1992:13). Gellner similarly argues that 'Nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically. Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored' (1983:55–56). However, the instrumentalist approach fails to account for why nationalist sentiment appeals so strongly to the non-élite audiences of this rhetoric (Levinger and Lytle 2001:176) and it further creates the impression that the lower classes lack any agentive identity and are unable to create their own forms of collectivity.

Constructivists, on the other hand, explain the powerful attraction of nationalist ideology by linking it to the definition of communal identity in response to the attenuation of traditional allegiances, for example the breakdown of traditional social structures that result from modernisation and industrialisation. This approach is exemplified by Anderson (1991; see also Babha 1990a; Greenfeld 1992; Said 1993) who emphasises the inventive and temporal quality of national identity, as well as its versatility in multiple political and social contexts. By rooting nationalism in operations of communal imagination, constructivists resist the primordialist assertion of the material basis of the nation in race, language, culture, or geography, supply a convincing narrative of the logic by which nationalism emerged in the modern period, and offer a useful corrective to the essentialist claims of nationalists themselves. Nonetheless, constructivism pays less attention to the specific vectors of nationalist action. Rather than presenting nuanced analyses of the techniques of national mobilisation, constructivist theorists have often been content merely to develop typologies of nationalism, contrasting its benevolent forms with those that are more pernicious. In practice, however, instrumentalism and constructivism are closely related: both emphasise the malleability of nations and nation-building, both accept that social structures, rather than essentialist biological or ethnic givens, create the bonds that connect people within a nation together, and both agree that nations are not pre-determined entities but are rather constructed. They differ only in their views of how

these social connections are created and maintained, leading Dawisha to characterise the instrumentalist approach as one that sees nation building as ‘*purposeful* construction’ (2001:6; my emphasis) as opposed to construction that does not carry a subtext of élite intervention.⁶

In my view, each approach has merit. Although the primordialist view has been convincingly challenged by scholars who take a constructivist or instrumentalist approach, it is helpful insofar as it offers a primarily descriptive account of at least cultural nationalists’ self-understanding; despite the modernity of nationalism, many nationalists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries consistently identified their histories as extending into the primordial past. The instrumentalist and constructivist accounts provide a useful analytical framework for understanding the discursive formation of national sentiment which Calhoun has described as providing ‘a common rhetoric to diverse movements and policies’ (1997:7).

My own approach in looking at German nationalism as cultural form is to combine the constructivist and instrumentalist frameworks while at the same time maintaining that most nationalists do not create nationalist sentiment *ex nihilo*. Thus, I do not want to deny the constructive efforts of nationalists but rather to insist that these efforts were undertaken with reference to pre-existing traditions, territories, and symbols, however they were re-employed by élites or, equally, by non-élites. In seeking to merge these perspectives I wish both to acknowledge the primordialist pretensions of the German nationalists of the nineteenth century and to assess the degree of construction they undertook in the process of mobilising the general populace. These nationalists diagnosed the causes of a perceived national degeneration, specified the efforts required to redeem the German nation, and thus prescribed the appropriate forms of political action that would secure the establishment of a unified nation state. They did so through the juxtaposition of idealised images of the nation's past and projected future with a degraded present.

⁶ Because of the close relationship of constructivism and instrumentalism, several scholars have sought to bridge the gap between them by examining the élite deployment of national narratives in order to mobilise their followers and tracking the disseminatory mechanisms that are used to achieve national loyalty amongst the broader populace. See, for example, Kedourie 1993; Brubaker 1996; Hechter 1987a; 1987b; Calhoun 1997. Anthony Smith, despite being frequently described as a primordialist, has also employed constructivist and instrumentalist approaches. See Smith 1971; 1986; 1988; 1991.

(ii) *The Triadic Structure of Nationalist Rhetoric*

Levinger and Lytle define this nationalist preoccupation with the past, present, and future as the 'triadic structure of nationalist rhetoric' (2001) and argue that virtually all rhetoric of national mobilisation contains these three juxtaposed elements, which they define as follows:

1. **The glorious past.** The original nation once existed as a pure, unified and harmonious community.
2. **The degraded present.** The shattering of this corporate unity through some agency or traumatic series of events undermined the integrity of the national community. A key dimension of this rhetoric is the identification of the sources of the nation's decay.
3. **The utopian future.** Through collective action, the nation will reverse the conditions that have caused its present degradation and recover its original harmonious essence.

(2001:178)

These three temporal frames are thus placed in an oppositional relationship where the past and future are contrasted with the derogated present and the establishment of a nation becomes both an inversion of the current turbulent condition and a reconstitution of the ideal primordial community.

Levinger and Lytle argue that the nationalist discourse that employs this triadic structure invokes a 'highly effective rhetorical strategy for mobilisation' where nationalist movements 'proceed from the realm of political imagination to the realm of action' (*ibid.*). Nationalists who encode the national project in this way therefore seek to (re)create an idealised community and to mobilise support for the nationalist project through harnessing the archaic force of the past. This mediation of historical consciousness through recourse to the glorious past is one way of mastering what Anderson (1991) calls 'contingency', of making national allegiances appear to be not random and fleeting, but rather providential, consecrated, and immutable. It also lends gravity and authority to the national cause in terms of granting a high pedigree of inheritance, and, as Levinger and Lytle note, 'delineate[s] specific sets of virtues that the nation must recapture in order to emulate its original greatness' (2001:179). Moreover, where territory is contested, the communal past may be used to provide prior title for one or other ethnic community or nation. Finally, the communal—but distant past—is malleable and as such lends itself well to the constructive projects of nationalists insofar as they seek to promote a *particular* version of nationalist history. As I will show in the following chapter, each of these elements characterised the German nationalist effort as implemented by the romantic nationalists. The juxtaposition of highly stylised and

selective images of the community's past, present and future thus served two critical rhetorical purposes: first, it motivated its audiences to join the collective struggle, to claim their share of the nation's glorious past; and secondly, it defined the appropriate vectors—that is, the alignment of the national community with an inventory of retrieved virtues—for nationalist action and thus cultivated a sense of belonging.

Much of this rhetoric depended on a nostalgic image of a nation's golden age which was used to transform the meanings of the past and the future so that they became one and the same, and could thereby persuade a population to align themselves with the national project. Anthony Smith has reflected insightfully on the way in which nationalists seek a 'usable past' constructed as a 'golden age', suggesting that the 'greater, more glorious that antiquity appears, the easier it becomes to mobilise people around a common culture, to unify the various groups of which they are composed and to identify a shared national identity' and that, in the nineteenth century, "'antiquity" became almost synonymous with ethnic liberation and efflorescence' (1997a:39; 41).

Smith identifies five functions that the concept of a golden age played in the emergent nationalist projects of the modern era (1997a:48–52), showing the ways in which 'politics and religion are frequently fused to generate powerful concepts of an ethnic past that can fire the imaginations of the members of a community' (1997:48). Firstly, it satisfies the 'quest for authenticity' (*ibid.*) that hinges on two types of identity formation: one of origin where "'who we are" is determined by "whence we came"' and one of difference where 'who we are' is determined through mythic schemes of alterity (1997:49). Thus, the golden age is used to establish and delineate the nature of the 'true self', the authentic character, of the community. The primordial existence of the nation guarantees its authenticity, its original and unadulterated nature. Secondly, the golden age concept functions to 'locate and *re-root* the community in its own historic and fertile space' (*ibid.*). As such it invokes a discourse of territoriality that connects temporality with spatiality and legitimates as well as 'nationalises' an attachment to a particular landscape (see also Penrose 2002). Thirdly, it consolidates a sense of 'continuity between the generations' (Smith 1997a:50), and thus prioritises a teleological model of history that renders the national community as a 'lineal descendant through linkages of name, place, language and symbol' (*ibid.*) In this function, the 'meaning' of the present is determined by the past where cultural and ethnic affinity with prior generations is established through recourse to a model of genealogical descent. As Smith suggests,

...the task of nationalists is essentially one of political archaeology: to rediscover and reconstruct the life of each period of the community's history, to establish the

linkages and layerings between each period, and hence to demonstrate the continuity of 'the nation', which is assumed to persist as a discrete, slowly changing identity of collective values, myths, symbols, and memories.

(*ibid.*)

The fourth function is essentially mnemonic: it serves to recollect the dignity and nobility of a community and affords a standard of comparison and evaluation in relation to both the past of the community and that of its neighbours. Further, remembrance in this form proclaims an impending status reversal where those communities that are currently oppressed may be restored to their former greatness: 'Memories of the golden age proclaim the hope of restoration of the community to its former high estate and true mission, thereby revealing the community's true worth and its ancient and noble pedigree' (1997:51). Finally, it functions to invoke a myth of divine election that imbues a community with a persistent sense of its providential destiny. As such, the noble past of a nation is used to prepare it for a pre-ordained destiny and to reveal a 'hidden direction and goal beneath the obscuring present' (*ibid.*; see also Cauthen 2004 and Guibernau and Hutchinson 2004).

Taken together, the functions of the concept of a golden age all seem to rely on an assumption of linear inheritance for the community from a singular point of origin. In fact, singularity is the primary characteristic of the origin in this context. Further, the concept also serves continually to derogate the present in favour of the past and the future and to offer an analysis of the present as a 'diagnosis of loss' (Levinger and Lytle 2001:181) with heavily nostalgic overtones. Within the rhetoric of nationalism that employs a concept of a golden age, there are various genres of loss: loss of language, of cultural integrity, of territory, of racial purity, of original unity, and so on. The significance of the diagnosis is that it enables the nation as community to be identified and demarcated through the attribution of its causes either to an internal agency—for example, moral degeneration—or an external factor such as military defeat. Thus the loss of linguistic, cultural, or racial purity is attributed to the intervention of another nation and serves as a marker for more consequential traumas, such as the loss of actual territory. In the context of German nationalism, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778–1852), an important figure in the cultivation of German patriotism, pointed to both internal and external factors leading to the nation's current decline. For Jahn, the German people had never overcome the 'wretched, shameful Peace of Westphalia' of 1648 imposed by other

nations.⁷ Internally, for Jahn, the loss of racial purity through Germany's failure to heed Tacitus' claim that the Germans were a people who had not mixed with others groups, endangered the inherent vigour of the German people (see Kluckhorn 1934:160).

The nostalgic valorisation of the past and the consequent derogation of the present also implies a utopian subtext where the future is elevated to a myth of destiny, characterised by the reunification of the national community and an inversion of the present through the assertion of a rhetoric of commonality (Levinger and Lytle 2001:185). An example of this expectant form of nationalism is well represented by Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769–1860) who was one of the most influential nationalists in Germany during the Napoleonic era. During the French occupation of the German territories (1806–1813) Arndt offered a vision of German unity, urging his compatriots to unite together on the basis of their singular unity in the past:

From the North Sea to the Carpathians, from the Baltic to the Alps, from the Vistula to the Schelde, one belief, one love, one spirit, and one passion must again bring together the whole German *Volk* in brotherly union. They must learn to feel how great, powerful, and fortunate their fathers were in obedience to *one* German emperor and *one* Reich, when the many feuds had not yet incited them against one another.

(in Kluckhorn 1934:141)

Moreover, in the absence of a powerful and unified nation-state, Arndt argued that collective unity had to be established from below—from the people themselves—rather than through entrusting the future to political leaders and monarchs. Thus the idyllic past was mirrored by a projected and redemptive image of German solidarity.

Underlying this type nationalist rhetoric, therefore, is a concern to mobilise the general populace to act in accordance with the kind of loss that has been diagnosed. One of the main mechanisms of mobilisation is myth. Myth as a 'narration of nation' (Babha 1990a) acts as a central force in the creation of the kind of nationalist rhetoric that advocates the triadic structure of past-present-future as well as an inspirational guide for collective action. In general terms the nationalist rhetoric that employs an image of a

⁷ The Peace of Westphalia refers to the treaty that ended the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) which granted official recognition to the Dutch Republic and Swiss Confederation. The treaty was essentially an agreement between the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III, the other German princes, representatives from the Dutch republic, France, and Sweden. Its effect was that the power of the Holy Roman Emperor was radically curtailed and the rulers of the German states were again able to determine the religion of their lands. Thus, all parties were called upon to recognise the Peace of Augsburg (1555), by which each prince in the German territories would have the right to determine the religion of his own state, the options being Lutheranism or Catholicism (on the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* discussed in Chapter 2). The treaty essentially laid to rest the idea of the Holy Roman Empire as having secular dominion over the entire Christian world. The terms of the treaty decreed that the nation-state would be the highest level of government, subservient to no others.

golden age and a future utopia is itself a form of mythmaking—of creating a heroic narrative of the nation by tracking its progress from the past to the present and through to a projected future as an iterable reflection of the past. As such it represents a fusion of diagnostic and prescriptive discourses (see Levinger and Lytle 2001:186) in that it identifies agentive culpability through a narration of the cause of national degeneration and simultaneously prescribes the forms of collective action required to restore the original status quo. A more specific analysis of myth and mythmaking in the context of German nationalism reveals a second type of employment of the genre, where existing vernacular narratives were retrieved as reservoirs of national character and served as manuals of Germanic virtues. This activity was founded upon the assumptions of loss and plans for redemption. Narratives of loss and redemption were a crucial tool for defining the collective identity of the national people; membership in the national community was predicated upon one's participation in the collective struggle, and on sharing this narrative framework. Nationalist myth, as such, acted as a kind of collective and familiar shorthand to invoke nationalist sentiment and was, moreover, thoroughly selective in the events it narrated as specifically national. This selectivity expressed the essence of national identification both in the past and in the projected future. However, the articulation of the imagined history that was articulated in this way should not be understood as a simply true or false account, but rather as a narrative that expressed the central concerns of the national movement's core vision and sense of its own identity whether through a broader narration of nation or through the subsidiary retrieval of vernacular myth traditions, and this is an aspect I will follow up in the next chapter.

(iii) Nationalism and Gender

Along with class, race, ethnicity, and linguistic vectors, gender was a central element in the process of national definition. As McClintock has suggests, 'All nations depend on powerful constructions of gender. Despite nationalism's ideological investment in the idea of popular *unity*, nations have historically amounted to the sanctioned institutionalisation of gender *difference*' (1993:61). Thus, the construction of nationalist identity within both cultural and civic nationalisms which purported to reconstitute an original unity was undermined by an underlying discourse of gender difference. Most of the debates I have outlined above, particularly regarding the distinctions drawn between the forms of nationalism, have either been gender-blind, or have enumerated gender as merely one element amongst others in the struggle to define the national

community. There is, however, a growing body of scholarship that has demonstrated that in the history of identity formation within the context of nationalism, bifurcated notions of gender were crucial to the conception of the modern nation and the definition of membership.⁸

Much of the feminist scholarship that has addressed the relationship between gender and nationalism has tended to focus exclusively on women.⁹ As a result, it has failed to examine systematically what might be uniquely masculine, in a structural, cultural, or social sense, about the gendered trajectories of nationalism. Joane Nagel is one exception arguing that nationalist politics are an expressly masculinist enterprise, and suggesting that the 'modern form of Western masculinity emerged at about the same time and place as modern nationalism' (1998:249). Here she follows Mosse who has noted that nationalism was 'a movement which began and evolved parallel to modern masculinity' and who has described masculinity as a centrepiece of all forms of nationalist activity: 'The masculine stereotype was not bound to any one of the powerful political ideologies of the previous century....Modern masculinity from the very first was co-opted by the new nationalist movements of the nineteenth century' (Mosse 1996:7). I will show in the following chapters that the attempt to define national identity was absolutely intertwined with an effort to define masculine identity through recourse to patrilineal models of inheritance, through the appropriation of reproductive metaphors to explain and legitimise male nationalist activity, and through a sharp differentiation between appropriate male and female behaviour. Cynthia Enloe has also made a link between masculinity and nationalism, arguing that 'nationalism has typically sprung from masculinised memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinised hope' (1990:45). She suggests that within much nationalist discourse, women are relegated to minor, often symbolic, roles either as icons of nationhood, to be elevated and defended, or as the spoils of war, to be denigrated or marginalised. In

⁸ See, for example, Mosse 1985; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Hall 1993; Einhorn 1996; Eisenstein 1985; Mackinnon 1989; Walby 1989; Enloe 1990, 1993; Davis, Leijenaar, and Oldersma 1991; Wendy Brown 1992.

⁹ However, as Anne McClintock has noted 'if male theorists are typically indifferent to the gendering of nations, feminist analyses of nationalism have been lamentably few and far between. White feminists, in particular, have been slow to recognise nationalism as a feminist issue' (1995:356–357). McClintock raises an important point here, that is, that the connections between gender and nationalism have been long recognised by postcolonial feminists who have pioneered research in the area and in so doing have drawn attention to a further relationship between colonialism and nationalism and the differentiated, agonistic experience that many non-western women have to feminism as a result. See, for example, Jayawardena 1986; De Mel 2001; Kim and Choi 1998; Moghadam 1994; Mohanty, Russo and Torres 1991; Sarkar 2001; Sunder Rajan 1993; Yuval-Davis 1997.

either case the appropriate agents of nationalist effort are considered to be men who characterise their activities as the defence of freedom, honour, the homeland, and women (see also Brodbeck 2006). Thus, as Nagel argues, 'Terms like honour, patriotism, cowardice, bravery and duty are hard to distinguish as either nationalistic or masculinist, since they seem so thoroughly tied both to the nation and to manliness' (1998:252). Constructions of gender identity—whether masculine or feminine—seem, therefore, to be central to efforts to determine the ideal form of the nation and the basis of membership, and further, are closely related to a patrilineal model of family within which most nationalists determine the relationships of a community's members.

Cultural nationalism invariably invoked a traditional or 'natural' domestic role for women and a public role for men. Women in particular tended to be viewed as having a role prior to the establishment of the nation state, acting as 'mothers' of the people. As O'Brien suggests, within the symbolic economy of nationalism, woman-as-mother serves a unificatory purpose where the 'maternal image...allows a particular group to identify itself in terms of an organic unit: the family' (O'Brien 1996–7:18). Consequently, women's place in the national community becomes symbolically representative of the origin of the putatively historical, quasi-organic primordial community in the glorious past (Kandiyoti 1991:434). However, simultaneously, women can be seen as threatening to the traditional order in the derogated present because the emancipatory discourses of modernisation that ostensibly offer women full citizenship are deemed to be a contributory factor in the breakdown of social order. The burden of national 'parenthood' is only symbolically associated with women if they behave in conformity with a conservatively construed femininity, enabling men to represent themselves on the model of the patriarchal family as the legitimate heads of the national 'family'.

Yuval-Davis and Anthias have identified five modes in which women have participated in nationalism: (i) as biological producers of members of ethnic collectivities; (ii) as reproducers of the normative boundaries of ethnic/national groups by conforming to 'appropriate' forms of feminine behaviour; (iii) as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture; (iv) as signifiers of ethnic/national differences; and (v) as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles (1989:7–8). Women's active participation in these 'struggles' however is very often limited in a male-dominated public sphere. Thus Yuval-Davis and Anthias note that a good deal of pressure is often

exerted on women by male nationalists to remain in supportive, symbolic, and traditional roles. Nagel suggests that this is partially due to the tendency of nationalists to be 'retraditionalisers' (1996:193), one that is explicable if the form of nationalism that is promoted invokes a concept of the past as a golden age of stable social arrangements. It seems, therefore, that the concept of a 'golden age' often inscribes patriarchal values.

Civic nationalism was similarly conceived and practised in gendered rather than universalist terms, at least insofar as political activity was viewed as a solely male prerogative prior to the twentieth century, and because, at least since the eighteenth century, men have been considered to be paradigmatic citizens. Glenda Sluga, for example, whose work examines post-revolutionary and nineteenth-century France, has shown how civic nationalism has a history of excluding women from the rights of citizenship, and that this exclusion was 'increasingly premised on the identification of "femininity" with the private sphere' (1998:90). Moreover, as Thomas Lacquer (1992) has shown, the earlier sixteenth- and seventeenth-century notion that women's bodies were inversions of men's was displaced from the late eighteenth-century onwards, as a specific outcome of the Enlightenment prioritisation of a mind/body dualism, by the idea of two oppositionally differentiated bodies. The subsequent grounding of gender difference in sexual difference had two effects: firstly, the masculine body was construed as both the social and the anatomical norm, and, secondly, this justified the exclusion of women from the now abstracted rhetoric of universal rights.

Within civic nationalism, as within cultural nationalism, the patriarchal family was portrayed as a microcosm of the social, economic and political order. Women's motherly role was emphasised as an essential contribution to the cultivation of children's nationalist loyalty in the domestic, *private* setting—the mother had responsibility for training her children to be good citizens—while the familial model of the nation-state endowed men with *public* political authority through an analogy drawn with their role as the head of the family. Any activity by women in the public sphere of politics defied this naturalised gender order and could therefore be represented as 'nationally subversive' (Sluga 1998:91).¹⁰ Thus, even though women were considered to have a central role in the creation of nation and served as symbols of the primordial community, beliefs regarding women's inherent 'disorderliness' on the model of their fluid and unmanageable corporeality meant that they could simultaneously be

¹⁰ Sluga shows how the excesses of the French Revolution were blamed on women's emancipation and the consequent blurring of gender hierarchies (1998:89–98). See also Harrison 2001.

represented as a threat to the nation, justifying the curtailment of their participation in the public sphere. As Sluga suggests, the logical corollary of the French Revolution's emancipatory discourse of universal rights should have been the extension of citizenship to women, but that even so 'the structural and discursive enforcement of a sexually differentiated public/private divide meant that the constitutional formalisation of citizenship was also the basis of women's legal exclusion from the nationally defined bourgeois public sphere' (1998:93).

The discourse that insisted on the gendered distinction between the public and the private, and which defined appropriate femininity as domestic, was certainly predominantly a bourgeois affair, closely related to attempts by the middle classes to expand their social and political power through the assertion of traditional family values and the development of a discourse of respectability.¹¹ As Sluga suggests, women's own patriotic efforts were confined to the 'the active reassertion of women's definitive "domesticity", or in some cases "maternity"'. She further notes that this did not, however, guarantee their citizenship, an aspect that reveals 'the limits of the political inclusiveness of early-nineteenth-century patriotism (and political nationalism)' (1998:100). It is no surprise to find, therefore, that in nineteenth-century Germany, many bourgeois women expressed their national sentiment in terms of their duties in the home and the creation of domestic order, contrasting their housekeeping habits with those of women in other European nations and colonial contexts. Nancy Reagan argues, for example, in seeking to understand how German women understood their own national identity, that the community of German bourgeois *Hausfrauen* was an 'imagined community' along the lines suggested by Anderson (1991).¹² For her,

¹¹ Mosse argues that the cultivation of bourgeois respectability was definitive of German nationality and that German resistance to French occupation was 'waged on behalf of patriotism and morality, both of which determined the direction of the new national self-consciousness' (1985:6). See also Mosse 1982 where he further links the gendering of respectability to the control of sexuality and suggests that 'the history of sexuality became part of the history of nationalism' because it 'not only helped to control sexuality, to reinforce what society considered normal, but it also provided the means through which changing sexual attitudes could be absorbed and tamed into respectability' (1982:222).

¹² See also Chickering 1988 who examines the marginalised role of women in nationalist associations in nineteenth-century Germany, suggesting that their presence in these organisations undermined the separation between the 'public' and the 'private' spheres. However, the actual number of women involved was very small and their primary role was deemed, by the male leaders of these associations, to be the raising of 'German' children. Hagemann provides further evidence for the view that women's patriotic activities were confined to their domestic role and related to what was considered to be traditional feminine behaviour. She analyses a pamphlet published in 1913 to commemorate the centenary of German resistance to the French occupation entitled 'Heroic Maidens and Women of a Great Era' which portrays women as 'consciously

although ‘most of its members would never meet each other’ they nonetheless saw themselves as belonging to a common group and that sense of belonging ‘helped define the national identity’ of these women (2001:54–55). Reagin analyses housewives’ magazines and other advice literature to show how the creation of ‘collective norms regarding household management, housekeeping practices, and the specific symbols of domesticity that arose out of housework’ assisted in the creation of a collective, national identity for bourgeois German women. For Reagin, ‘the idealized standards promoted in German advice literature were important as yardsticks for the organization of identity, both on an individual basis (in helping to determine a woman’s reputation) and in the context of national comparisons’ (2001:58). In the following chapter I will discuss how the concept of separate gendered spheres was further reinforced in collections of vernacular folklore of the kind undertaken by the Grimm brothers.

Women’s and men’s relations to the modern nation thus had different trajectories. As McClintock observes, ‘Women are represented as the atavistic and authentic “body” of national tradition....Men, by contrast, represent the progressive agent of national modernity’ (1993:66). The role of women, then, was strongly identified with the nation’s backward gaze to its putative origins and traditions, although sons, in taking on this knowledge, could use it to push the nation forward to a utopian future. But if women were the passive guardians of national traditions and morals, the modern state located its masculine forebears as fathers and leaders of the nation and as the fount of the nation’s native skills and genius: the patriot’s patrimony. As such there was some ambiguity in the claim that women were the mothers of the nation. It would seem, rather, that they occupied a purely symbolic role, or were figured as a site of projected nationalist desire, rendering them passive and interring them in the private sphere. Men were consequently able to appropriate a reproductive metaphor—one where they were cast in the role of fathers of the nation—to characterise their nation-building efforts and to grant legitimacy to the conception of the nation as a matter for the public sphere.

Sluga has also examined the close association of fatherhood with nationalism, going so far as to claim that nationality, at least in the context of post-revolutionary France under the *Code Napoléon*,¹³ was conceived in patrilinear terms insofar as it

rejecting all French influences in culture, language and dress and by performing their female “duties” in household and family in keeping with “German manners” (2004:398).

¹³ The original *Code Napoléon* was the French civil code, established at the behest of Napoléon I in March 1804. It was based both on earlier French laws and Roman law, and followed Justinian’s *Corpus Juris Civilis* (‘Body of Civil Law’, which was issued from 529 to 534 by order of Justinian I,

articulated a 'preference which incurred particular paternal responsibilities' (1998:94). Thus an emphasis was placed on the father's role in securing the nationality of his progeny and fathers were legally required under the Code to bear witness to the birth of their children. Sluga further suggests that this responsibility was translated into a symbol of masculine responsibility for the birth of the nation and as such is indicative of a male fear of women's reproductive ability and a tendency to appropriate reproduction as a male domain, further ensuring the marginalisation of women from the political process of nation building. Although this was the situation in France, nationalist responsibilities were conceived in very similar terms in Germany. In terms that echo Herder's recommendation that fathers should be responsible for passing national traditions and values on to their children, Fichte, in his tenth 'Address to the German Nation' (1807), invoked an image of the father as the parent best placed to cultivate a sense of identity and—through an analogical association—nationalist sentiment in his child due the child's instinctive concern to emulate 'his' father:

In the child this instinct appears first of all as the desire to be respected by those who inspire in him the highest respect....[L]ove...is directed as a rule far more strongly and decisively toward the sterner parent, the father, who is more often absent, and who does not appear directly as a benefactor, than toward the mother, who with her beneficence is ever present. The child wants to be noticed by him, wants to have his approval; only insofar as the father is satisfied with him is he satisfied with himself. This is the natural love of the child for the father, not as the guardian of his sensuous well-being, but as the mirror, from which his own worth or worthlessness is reflected for him.

(1968:147)

In its nationalist context, Fichte's statement implies that as the child relates to the father as a 'mirror of his worth', so does the individual relate to the nation. Thus the father stands as a discursive metaphor: he becomes the 'creator god' of the nation, an ideal horizon of national identity.¹⁴

Byzantine Emperor) in dividing civil law into personal status, property, and the acquisition of property. The intention behind the Code was to reform the French legal system in accordance with the principles of the French Revolution. During the Revolution, vestiges of feudalism were abolished, and the many different legal systems used in different parts of France were to be replaced by a single legal code. With regards to family, the Code established the supremacy of the husband with respect to the wife and children. It was adopted in many countries occupied by the French during the Napoleonic Wars and thus formed the basis of the private law systems also of Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and their former colonies. In the German regions on the left bank of the Rhine the Napoleonic Code was in use until the introduction of the *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch* in 1900 as the first common civil code for the entire German empire.

¹⁴ Marilyn Lake has identified this appropriation of procreation in nationalist rhetoric that figured in nation-building efforts following the collapse of the *ancien régime*: 'The king, or father, comes under attack: his monopoly of politically creative power is seized and shared equally among men. In civil society all men, not just fathers, can generate political life and political right. Political right

Gendered corporeal differentiation also served to delineate national, and thus territorial, boundaries. Moira Gatens (1991:Ch. 2; 1995) has suggested that gendered depictions of corporeal difference are directly related to national membership and citizenship rights. She argues that through the imagining of the body politic as masculine, women are placed at a social and political disadvantage and are consequently more easily excluded from imaginings of nationhood. Thus, in the context of nationalism, because men's bodies were represented as naturally equipped to be both defenders of the nation and invaders of other nations, women were portrayed as having no 'natural' affinity with the nation. The representation of their bodies as unbounded, defenceless territory reinforced the analogy between the vulnerable corporeality of women and that of the national territory, and legitimised and naturalised the vigilant, protective male role. This vulnerability was reflected in the reluctance of many European nations to grant women full citizenship rights—Germany granted women the vote in 1918, the United Kingdom in 1928, and France in 1944. As Sluga notes, 'In terms of the concept of "cultural" nationalism, *masculine* individuals embodied nationality' (1998:104). In terms of civic nationalism the Enlightenment emphasis on male autonomy was translated, again through a corporeal image, into the sovereignty of the nation state or citizens.

Significantly, territory itself is often referred to in nationalist rhetoric as explicitly gendered, either as a motherland or fatherland, and as such, it figures as a trope for the nation's origins. The nature of these origins express a dualistic discourse of sexual differentiation. The gendering of the homeland ('*Heimat*') in the case of German nationalism presents an interesting and ambivalent case. The nation in Germany was invariably referred to as the *Vaterland* ('Fatherland') but obvious anxieties around the permeability of its borders in the aftermath of the French occupation indicated a contradictory notion of territory figured as explicitly female. The national mythology that emerged out of German romanticism, an aspect I explore in the following two chapters, was a clear attempt to resolve this ambiguity through the imposition (within myth traditions and on the landscape) of characters and monuments that simultaneously celebrated and constructed an inspirational form of archaic masculinity that appropriated territory as male and, therefore, impenetrable.

is defined in terms of sex-right. Political creativity belongs not to paternity, but masculinity. Men give birth to nations' (1992:312).

In addition to the patrilineal overlay of the nationalist rhetoric, metaphors of fraternal relationships also played an important and related role in creating, developing, and maintaining the bonds of the national community. Carole Pateman (1988) has suggested that the French Revolution marked a transition from the principle of paternity to that of fraternity—a brotherhood which depended once more on the exclusion of women—in the work of social contract theorists from the seventeenth century onwards. Marilyn Lake (1992) builds on Pateman’s work to link the fraternity of the public sphere to the ‘birthing’ of nations, noting a shift in nationalist rhetoric from a paternal to a fraternal model of sovereignty. However, in my view, paternity was still the underlying metaphor upon which fraternal bonds were established between men, particularly with regard to the national role of ‘fathers’ in establishing the nation state outlined above: in this context brothers are brothers because they share the same father, that is, the nation or homeland. The character of fraternal bonds and the fraternal basis of national unity were predicated on an emergent essentialist discourse of masculinity determined through the definition of particular virtues as ‘manly’. Mosse (1996) has described these as markers of ‘normative masculinity’; they included willpower, honour, courage, discipline, competitiveness, strength, stoicism, independence, sexual virility tempered with restraint, and dignity, all of which were thought to be reflected in masculine ideals as liberty, equality, and fraternity.¹⁵ Thus the culture of nationalism, whether cultural or civic, provided a venue in which men could ‘accomplish’ their masculinity (Connell 1987). It was constructed to emphasise and resonate with the construction of masculine culture but also to provide a patriarchal familial framework in which to understand the seemingly natural foundation of national unity. Unity and fraternalism were interchangeable concepts. Fichte, for example, argued in his tenth ‘Address to the German Nation’ that the German people needed to be educated nationally in order to develop the strength of character required for the nation-building effort, and that this would bond them together as ‘men of one mind’ (1968:148). Martina Kessel argues that in the German-speaking regions of the nineteenth century, while the construction of masculinity by the educated élite always included a relational reference to femininity,

¹⁵ See Connell 1990. These ‘manly virtues’ were attempts to establish a normative definition of masculinity which excluded many men who did not fit the ideal model. Thus masculinity in the context of nineteenth-century nationalism articulated the meaning of manhood in terms of what it was not: feminine, homosexual, and black, Jewish, Indian, and so on. Connell suggests the term ‘hegemonic masculinity’ to understand the appeal of this model in that it sets an aspirational ideal for male behaviour, actions, and demeanour.

in the model of the *ganzer Mann* (the whole, well-rounded, but also “real” or “proper” man), it ignored this relational character. It thus became possible to imagine a purely male world without the dependence upon femininity that the relational model necessarily implied.

(2003:2)

This exclusively male—one might say, homosocial—fraternal world thus enabled the definition of the public sphere as masculine. Moreover, it aided the military discipline and comradeship that was necessary for resisting the French occupation. Hoffmann, who examines the striking increase in Masonic lodges in nineteenth-century Germany, suggests that ‘While, both in public and private spheres, men increasingly sought to accord with the ideal of a man ruled by reason, emotional relations between men attained increasing significance in locations which were removed from the family and from the public’ (2001:225). He cites a speech given at a Masonic lodge in 1858 in Stuttgart to demonstrate how comradeship between men was seen to be the basis of civil society (2001:226). As such, the creation of homosocial spaces carried with it a subtext of male purity where male friendship was related to moral improvement and to a strong sense of unity upon which the nationalist project was contingent. The advocacy and idealisation of male friendship will be further explored in Chapter 6.

Imaginations of national territory either as female or male but defined and defended by both individually and collectively imagined male bodies, the father’s education of his sons into national citizenship and soldiery, the consequent valorisation of a fraternal bond between men, and the figuring of the nation as a patriarchal family were all recurring motifs in nineteenth-century formulations of national identity. Further, they coincided with the masculine identification of the public sphere and of active citizenship that was characteristic of civic nationalism, and aided the valorisation of the triadic structure of nationalist rhetoric that was a particular feature of cultural nationalism. In my view, the significance of the alignment of hegemonic models of masculinity with concepts of the nation in the nineteenth century is that it points to an underlying anxiety regarding the stability and feasibility of both male identity and national identity. Nationalist movements arose in response to unprecedented social and political changes and were an attempt both to ameliorate and to accommodate their effects through recourse to concepts of the unified nation state, whether cultural or civic. The construction of normative masculinity appears to have been a corresponding response to seismic shifts in hierarchical gender arrangements as the implications of the emancipatory discourse of the Enlightenment ordained a principle of universal equality that might grant women full participation in the political sphere. The logical corollary of

this principle was the potential erasure of sexual and gender difference as parity between men and women was, at least conceptually, established. As such the basis on which masculinity could be definitively asserted was destabilised if not removed. It was thus necessary to reassert a solid and seemingly naturalised logic of sexual difference that privileged masculinity in the public sphere and secured its impenetrable boundaries while women were derogated to the private sphere. At the same time the construction of the nation state was enacted in similarly stabilising terms. Rejecting the fragility of masculinity and that of the nation went hand in hand.

I have examined the relationship between gender and nationalism in detail here because of the centrality of gender to conceptions of (national) identity that this thesis seeks to establish and in the following two chapters the connection between masculinity and nationalism will be explored and exemplified further. In the following section my purpose is to examine the extent to which nineteenth-century German nationalism emulated the cultural model described earlier. I will return in the following chapter to an application of the triadic model of national rhetoric in respect of the retrieval of vernacular folklore.

II. German Cultural Nationalism

The emergence of German nationalism as a cultural form was very closely related to, if not provoked by, the philosophical and aesthetic concerns of the German romantics who mounted an intellectual challenge—informed by a commitment to Herderian cultural organicism—to Enlightenment rationalism and atomistic individualism. Against a background of what at least seemed to be unprecedented social and political turmoil, German romanticism and nationalism were marked by a politics of nostalgia:¹⁶ they were concerned to retrieve from the rapidly receding past a redemptive narrative of collective identity by asserting the primacy of archaic traditions and literature in opposition to the cosmopolitan and rationalist disdain for indigeneity, the past, and myth. As the historian Reinhold Aris has observed, the German reaction to French aggression prompted leading romantic figures ‘to find a refuge in the historic past and a belief that Germany could only be saved if it trusted to tradition and the law of historic continuity rather than to rational experiments’ (1965:219). German romanticism in this mode, in setting itself against Enlightenment doctrines of cosmopolitanism that had contributed to the destruction of traditional social structures, thus sought to offer a more

¹⁶ See Chapter 1, section II above.

concrete and essentialised formulation of German identity in order to aid a cultural nationalistic agenda that could derive its rationale from the archaic past and assert its legitimate existence.

In Chapter 1 I surveyed two of the defining features of the romantic movement within eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe—that is, the revival of vernacular traditions, whether linguistic or literary, and the idealisation of the rural landscape and its inhabitants—and examined how, in the context of rapid political and social change, romantic thinkers were ultimately concerned with providing a cohesive foundation upon which both social stability and national unity could be achieved. In particular, it was the rediscovery—and, frequently, invention—of vernacular traditions, whether literary, linguistic, or mythological, which furnished nationalist movements with a template for defining the contours of nationhood. I thus showed how it was common for European societies seeking to constitute themselves as nations to turn not only to the assertion of a common language, history and destiny, to shared folk and literary traditions, values and national character, but also to ancient heroic figures and the claim of a primordial relationship to the landscape, all of which provided a set of recognisable symbols under which a people could unite. Nowhere in Europe was this preoccupation with indigeneity more pronounced than in the German territories. In the following chapters I will show how it was the German romantics, more than any others, who exemplified the concern with cultivating nationalist sentiment through the promotion of the redemptive force of the past, the recovery of folk traditions and ancient heroes, the sacralisation of the German landscape, and the providential mission of a greater Germany. Their aesthetic and philosophical speculations proved enormously influential in determining the qualities of German nationalism as a *cultural* unity rather than an exclusively *political* force.

In nineteenth-century Germany, debates concerning the form of the nation—whether to assert a *Kleindeutsch* or *Großdeutsch* framework—were concerned with delineating an essential German character that would resolve the difficulties of achieving national unification in a context of confessional and regional differences. At each stage of the debate regarding the nature of the German character and its relationship to the formation of a unified nation state, the German romantics' influence proved decisive in establishing the contours within which both German identity and the desire for such a state could be articulated as I will discuss below.

The rise of national consciousness in Germany had at least two main roots. Firstly, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards Herder, Goethe, and Justus Möser (1720–1794) reacted against the cosmopolitanising influence of the French in the areas of language, literature, etiquette, social customs, education, and political reform as I discussed in Chapter 2. Their efforts in turn exercised a strong influence on the organic and idealist philosophies of the German romantics who based their theories on an assumption of the cultural unity of the *Volk*, and who were able consequently to idealise the German character, to recall a golden age of the German people, and to stress a providential view of Germany's destiny. Secondly, there was the more immediately pressing need to fight for national self-preservation against French military aggression, a task in which many of the German romantics were wholeheartedly involved. In both cases the triadic model of nationalist rhetoric surveyed above provided a framework that reinforced the cultural aspects of German nationalism.

The scholarly literature on the rise of German nationalism¹⁷ in the nineteenth century has tended to emphasise its cultural or *Völkisch* roots, understanding these as a consequence of the absence in Germany (as I suggested in Chapter 2) of a unified political system, when contrasted to the political and economic origins of nationalism in western Europe, particularly that of France and Britain. Robert Berdahl (1972:65–68) attributes the German historian Friedrich Meinecke (1862–1954), whose pioneering work *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* (1908; trans. 1970) charted the rise of German national consciousness in the nineteenth century, with an important influence in this regard. Meinecke presented German nationalism as a unique product of Germany's common cultural and ethnic heritage—its political fragmentation notwithstanding—where national sentiment or spirit (*geist*) preceded the formation of a unified state in contrast to the western European nations where the state (built upon monarchical absolutism) had preceded the nation. He asserted an organic, idealist notion of German nationalism, echoing Herder's own conception of the nation and its *Völkisch* quality:

The state is not and does not become national through the will of the people or those who govern it but through the same means that language, customs, and faith are national and become national—through the quiet workings of the national spirit.

(Meinecke 1970:18)

¹⁷ The literature is vast. The main sources I have consulted are: Mosse 1975, 1981; Snyder 1978; Harold James 1989; Schulze 1991, 1996; Hermand 1992; Townson 1992; Helmut Walser Smith 1995; Hermand and Steakley 1996; Geiss 1997; Herminghouse and Mueller 1997; Giesen 1998; Oergel 1998; Hewitson 2000; Jan-Werner Müller 2000; Vanchena 2000; Green 2001; Blickle 2002.

Berdahl argues, therefore, that from Meinecke onwards, 'historians of German nationalism have been largely preoccupied with the fact that it had origins different from those of Western Europe, that it sprang from German culture, and that it can be studied primarily in the ideas of its writers' (1972:68).

Berdahl believes that this has led, mistakenly, to a historiographical tendency to trace German nationalism through intellectual histories—that is, the articulation of cultural nationalism in the work of the German nationalist poets and thinkers—at the expense of the material realities of German unification. He argues, for example, and I agree, that the efforts of Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898) to establish the Deutsche Reich under the Prussian King Wilhelm I in 1870–1871 were not obviously determined by romantic conceptions of a German polity, but by more immediate concerns to secure Prussian political dominance against the Austrian Habsburg Empire. Moreover, although he acknowledges that resistance to French aggression and the subsequent Wars of Liberation (1813–1814) were important in providing a stimulus for German nationalism, for Berdahl they do not

fully explain why the cultural idea of the nation was gradually transformed into the demand for closer political unity, nor why, once the external provocation of French occupation was removed, nationalism continued to capture the imagination of important groups in Germany.

(1972:69)

He goes on to assess the weaknesses of the 'intellectual history' approach by suggesting that it does not adequately explain the interrelationship between the ideas of national/cultural unity and political reality, and nor does it account for the increased appeal of nationalism as a *political movement* in the period between 1800 and 1848 (1972:69). Furthermore, for Berdahl, it obscures the process of translation of what were predominantly the preoccupations of a few intellectuals into broader popular sentiment (1972:68–71).

Berdahl suggests instead, therefore, that an analysis of the economic basis of German nationalism presents a more fruitful arena for investigation in that it explains the generation of national sentiment against a background of growing awareness of Germany's relative economic backwardness and desire to achieve the material gains witnessed in other European countries. Focusing on the economic basis of German nationalism shows that the quest in Germany for economic modernisation resulted both in the 'destruction of traditional allegiances and a degree of social disintegration' and in the production of a 'psychological need for the creation of the consciousness of a broader community, the nation' (Berdahl 1972:75, 74) that could then capitalise on

economic advancement. He also draws attention to the demographic shifts in Germany after 1815—particularly the expansion of urban centres and the massive shift of population from the countryside to cities—which he argues contributed to the functional aspect of German nationalism (1972:76). Such an instrumentalist idea leads him to ask rhetorically whether ‘the ideology of nationalism [was] used by the urban élites to command the loyalty and obedience of the new urban masses for whom the traditional loyalties of kinship and tradition no longer existed’ (1972:77).¹⁸

Berdahl’s argument is well made and I do not wish to discount the important role that economic developments (and the related issue of class mobility) played in the political formulation of the German nation state. However, nor do I want to underplay the crucial support given by the idea of cultural or *Völkisch* nationalism to the political arena in which nationalist sentiment was harnessed, instrumentally, for material or territorial gain; in other words, I believe that the romantic cultural ideology combined mythical and deliberately manufactured symbols of Germanness into a grammar of aspirations in order to ensure the material actualisation of the culturally defined nation it envisioned. Thus a significant aspect of the elaboration of theories of nationhood in nineteenth-century Germany lay in defining a specific set of attributes as the ‘national character’ of the German people. As Harold James has suggested, ‘Describing [national] character invariably involves idealization and a substantial amount of myth-making’ and that this tends to occur where there is ‘no institutional context for nation-building’ for the reason that ‘[i]f national identity lies in political and institutional arrangements, there is no need to be preoccupied with the search for an elusive national character’ (1989:9).

The fragmented and unstable state of Germany’s political institutions in the early years of the nineteenth century thus meant that character building had both to precede and to enable nation building and that mythmaking was an essential aspect of both. In the absence of institutions which might determine the patterns and properties of their national character, the German people had to manufacture their own concept or discourse of nationality; they needed to formulate and imagine a glorious national past,

¹⁸ This view is similar to the instrumentalist perspective of Gellner (1983) who argues that the close identification of culture with the state, which he considers to be the defining quality of nationalism, was absent in pre-industrial, agrarian societies. He suggests instead that nationalism could only emerge as industrialisation and advanced technology brought with them an unavoidable commitment to economic growth and occupational mobility which combined steadily to erode feudal hierarchies and, consequently, forced peoples’ cultural identities to be much more closely bound up with the state and an over-arching national identity.

to reassert territorial belonging, and to prescribe an idealised—and hopefully, materialised—future.¹⁹ They did so through three determinants of national unity: language, archaic culture/tradition, and the nationalisation of landscape. These were further related to, and legitimated by, three sub-discourses: that of ethnic election which inscribed a sense of destiny regarding the providential mission of the German people; of national archetypes epitomised by both a conception of the German *Urvolk* and heroes like Arminius; and of the primordial or medieval past as a golden age, drawing on the ethnography of Tacitus, on vernacular folklore, and on the myths found in texts such as the *Nibelungenlieder* and the *Prose Edda*. In each case the gendered and class dialectic discussed previously determined the form and content of German nationalism throughout the nineteenth century.

By tracing the elaboration of theories of nationhood in the work of key romantic intellectuals and those whom they influenced, I want to show how, in the absence of a strong institutional and political basis for the construction of national identity, the mythical and malleable quality of the German romantics' narration of identity provided one of the main ways through which national sentiment could be manufactured and exploited.²⁰ This narration owed much to Herder's theories of the *Volk*, and furthermore, sustained the national project in the wake of the failure of the *Deutsches Reich* to secure full and longstanding unification. Somewhat paradoxically, however, it also served as the basis for the eventual shift in formulations of German identity away from an emphasis on cultural unity (derived from a common language and from cultural forms such as literature, shared history and protestant forms of religiosity) towards that of race and blood, and in so doing it provided fertile ground for the anti-Semitic discourse of differentiation that I will explore in Chapter 7. The German romantics were thus influential in two important ways: they worked determinedly to define a Germanic archetype through recourse to the past, to vernacular traditions, and to idealist and organicist philosophy, and they also laid the groundwork for the success of race science

¹⁹ Berdahl has also recognised the relationship of these imaginative acts to the national building effort, but suggests that 'culture did not "form" the German national state, it legitimised it' (1972:70).

²⁰ Harold James has wisely noted that 'There are always, in any society, not one but several storytellers in the invention of nationality, who usually cannot agree even about the general structure of the narrative' (1989:8). Bearing this in mind I am not proposing that the narration of German identity and its connection to the nation state was monolithic and single-voiced. Rather, it is my intention in this chapter to tell just one story about some of the stories that were told—and retrieved—by an important set of storytellers as they sought to narrate the German nation into existence.

in securing the notion that the German people alone, defined against the 'parasitic' Jews, were the true Aryans, the original people, and therefore the most prestigious amongst the European nations.

I want to argue, therefore, that rather than seeing cultural production or mythmaking as unconnected to political reality, in the context of the politics of German identity it is important to remain alert to the enabling, generative power of cultural ideologies or discourses as they were negotiated and imposed upon public spaces and politics. I believe, moreover, that by understanding the role of intellectuals in formulating the properties of Germanness and then in disseminating these formulas through, for example, the collection and publication of folklore and myths, educational reform, the establishment of societies and student movements, the building of monuments, and the setting up of memorial festivals, the integral relationship between ideas (discourse), class, gender, and ethnicity might be made clearer. Thus, the bourgeois intellectuals and public figures of the time, recognising the need to garner public support in the nation-building effort, made a concerted effort to ensure that their prescriptive ideas of nationhood received wide circulation, and one of the ways this was achieved was through aligning themselves with the class interests of the aristocracy and appropriating the cultural practices, customs, and folklore of the lower classes, as I will discuss in the following chapter. Thus, in the case of the German romantic project there was certainly a concerted effort to use cultural nationalist discourse to enhance the status of the emergent bourgeoisie, but by deriving models of German identity from the peasantry/proletariat, the lower classes were invested with a form of stable identity that contrasted favourably with the sense of fragmentation and uncertainty felt by the urban middle classes. However, what the bourgeois romantics were successful in achieving was the imposition of limits upon what could be spoken of—that is, produced—regarding broader notions German identity, in ways echo Foucault's analysis of discursive mediation.

By paying attention to their work, the romantic writers' and their audiences' cognitive relationship to their own historical moment can be better understood and a sense can be gained of how their desires regarding German identity were conceived, articulated, and then realised, at least in part. Also, as noted above, the triadic model of nationalist rhetoric that I am using establishes how the nationalist rhetoric of élite groups was translated into potential 'trajectories for action' that then mobilised large sections of the general populace. As Levinger and Lytle have argued, 'Action is

prefigured in the realm of imagination, and thus it is in the realm of political imagination that an analysis of nationalist action must begin (2001:190). In the following chapter, therefore, I will examine the imaginative efforts of the German romantics both to formulate and prescribe national characteristics and behaviour, all of which were intertwined with a call to establish a national mythology.

It was, as Hagen Schulze suggests, the humiliating defeat of Prussia and the subsequent French occupation in the first decade of the nineteenth century which set German nationalism alight and produced a new form of patriotism that began to create a sense of German identity built around shared language, history, and traditions, indicating that nationalism in Germany took a cultural, rather than civic, form:

Enlightened persons...had previously understood the concept of nationalism in terms of a state, which along the lines of even the French Revolution at its beginning, would effect the greatest number of its citizens. However, when this concept was confronted with an aggressive French nationalism,...Herder's idea about the fundamental social individuality of the *Volkstum* ['national people' in Herder's use] based on language now grew virulent.

(1991:50)

This emphasis on the cultural and linguistic basis of a German nation against more civil or contractually-based conceptions, however, contributed to the difficulties with which German unification was achieved and to the range of debates over the best grounds upon which to build the nation. The demise of the Holy Roman Empire (December 1805) and the vacuum that it left behind, as well as the impotence of Prussia in the face of French aggression during the Napoleonic Wars (roughly 1799–1815), together provoked the need to assert a new and stronger idea of German national identity. Two other related elements also proved influential in this regard: on the one hand, the call of the French Revolution for the value of a '*nation une et indivisible*' was compelling for educated Germans who had experienced the full extent of the Empire's impotence as well as that of the other German states, most notably Prussia, during the Revolutionary Wars (1792–1802); on the other hand French imperialist ambitions, following French success in these wars, made a form of German national unity an urgent necessity if French aggression was to be successfully resisted (Schulze 1991:48).

The course of nationalism in nineteenth-century Germany was organised around debates concerning both the basis and form the nation state was to take, and the attempt to reach a consensus regarding what national unity might mean given the regional and religious divisions between the German territories. The establishment of the German Confederation of thirty-nine states under the leadership of Prussia and Austria following the defeat of Napoleon and the subsequent Congress of Vienna (1814–

1815) provided a fragile form of unification. Led by the Austrian statesman, Prince von Metternich (1773–1859), the Confederation attempted to emulate the now deceased Holy Roman Empire, but Metternich's extreme conservatism and strong advocacy of the absolute right of kings led to the liberal revolutions of 1848 which saw the collapse of the Confederation and the creation of the Frankfurt Parliament in the same year. It was in the Parliament that debates regarding the possibility of the establishment of a unified nation state, and the delineation of its geographical boundaries were first raised in a serious way, whereas prior to this unification had been called for through recourse to the apparently 'natural' affinity of the German-speaking people with each other. However, delegates to the Assembly faced a number of problems that were particular to the German territories and which constituted stumbling blocks to the realisation of a nation state modelled on the Enlightenment ideal of contractual nationhood represented by the likes of Britain and France. As Laurence Birken suggests,

The existence of two rival centres of power in Berlin and Vienna, the division between a Protestant North and a Catholic South, the lack of natural boundaries, as well as the diaspora-like pattern of German settlement in the East all stood in the way of the consolidation of [a unified nation state].

(1994:135)

Within this context, a number of solutions were suggested, all of which were in some way unsatisfactory. The first option was what became known as the *Großdeutschland* ('greater Germany') solution which proposed the amalgamation of all the German-speaking areas of Austria along with the German territories which had been part of the German Confederation, but this would have meant that both the Habsburg Empire of Austria and the Hohenzollern dynasty in Prussia would have had to subordinate dynastic interests to the idea of national interest, which neither were prepared to do. The second option was the *Kleindeutsch* solution which would exclude all the Austrian territories but include all the states of the Confederation and come under the leadership of Prussia, thus maintaining the monarchical balance of power between the Habsburgs and the Hohenzollerns and denying the precedence of national considerations. The third option, under what became known as the *Mitteleuropa* scheme, was to construct a federation of relatively independent states which would include the entire Austrian empire, Prussia, and all the small German states, but again this had the disadvantage of preserving the *status quo* that had led to the uprisings of 1848 in the first place (Carr 1992:88–89). The fourth option was either to establish a hereditary or elected monarchy or to found a republic following the French model. The Assembly finally decided on March 28, 1849 that Germany should be a constitutional monarchy, and the

office of head of state ('Emperor of the Germans') was to be hereditary and held by the King of Prussia. This solution, however, was only recognised by twenty-nine smaller states and it failed to gain the support of Austria, Prussia, Bavaria, Hanover, and Saxony. Undeterred, delegates from the Assembly approached King Frederick Wilhelm IV of Prussia and offered him the crown under a new constitution. He refused on the grounds that he could only accept with the agreement of the other sovereign monarchs in the German territories, which would, of course, be denied. It is also clear, however, that to have accepted the crown from the National Assembly would have been to acknowledge the priority of democratic ideals over the dynastic principle of the divine right of kings (Birken 1994:135). The dynastic powers of Austria and Prussia withdrew their delegates from the Assembly and the lower class groups who had led the uprisings and who had initially invested such hope in its emancipatory potential abandoned the Assembly, leading to its dissolution in 1849 (Carr 1979:50).

The German Confederation was resumed by 1851 and Austrian leadership was temporarily restored, but the Austro-Prussian War (1866)²¹ led to the dissolution of the Confederation and the establishment of the North German Confederation of twenty-two states under Prussian leadership in 1867—clearly in the mould of *Kleindeutschland*.²² Under Bismarck's guidance the Confederation was eventually superseded by the German Empire (referred to at the time as the Second Reich—with the Holy Roman

²¹ The Austro-Prussian War was a result of Bismarck's *Kleindeutsch* policy. Having traded on the increase in German national consciousness by convincing Austria to join him in the Second War of Schleswig (1864) where the combined forces of Prussia and Austria fought against Denmark for control of the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, he then provoked a conflict with Austria over the administration of the conquered duchies. Austria declared war and called for the armies of the minor German states to join them. The Austrian alliance was defeated by the Prussians in a series of battles and in order to forestall intervention by France or Russia, that Austria was pushing for, Bismarck persuaded the King of Prussia, Kaiser Wilhelm I, to sue for peace rather than continue the war in hopes of further territorial gain. With the assistance of the French emperor Napoleon III, the Treaty of Prague was signed on August 23, 1866 resulting in the dissolution of the German Confederation, Prussian annexation of Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, Hesse-Kassel, Nassau, and Frankfurt, and the permanent exclusion of Austria from German affairs. This left Prussia free to form the North German Confederation the following year. The war left Prussia dominant in Germany, and as a result the remaining independent states allied with Prussia in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, and then acceded to the crowning of King Wilhelm as German Emperor.

²² Birken rightly argues that Bismarck's main concern was to preserve Prussian 'monarchical absolutism' and that it was only the *Kleindeutsch* solution that offered any hope in this regard. He suggests that a *Großdeutsch* option (dependent on the destruction of the Habsburgs) would have 'made Prussia too big by drowning it in a sea of Germans held together not by allegiance to an alien dynasty but only by their common nationality' (1994:136). The South German states, notably Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, and the grand duchy of Hesse, though excluded from the Confederation, were nevertheless closely bound to it through their membership in the *Zollverein* which was a customs union established to eliminate tariff barriers throughout the German territories.

Empire considered to be the first—*Deutsches Reich*, or *Kaiserreich*) in 1871 which ostensibly united the majority of German states under Kaiser Wilhelm I, but which excluded Austria. John Breuilly argues, therefore, that Bismarck's 'achievements of 1866–7 could, from a "national" perspective, better be described as a *division* rather than a unification' and that the establishment of the *Kaiserreich* was just as problematic as the preceding state of affairs (1992:12). Rather, what Bismarck accomplished was the *impression* that in 1871 something called 'Germany' was unified. As Birken suggests, what was in effect a 'counterfeit Reich' (when compared to the much broader unifying power of the Holy Roman Empire) was made possible because 'Bismarck had the tactical sense to dress up ancient institutions [the dynastic principle of monarchical government] in modern form' (1994:137). The appearance rather than the actuality of unification was certainly enabled by the belief in the cultural bonds—the unifying nature of *Völkisch* traditions—between the German people that had been advocated first by Herder, and then by the romantic intellectuals who followed in the first part of the nineteenth century. In the light of Bismarck's *Kleindeutsch* solution it was the *Völkisch* nationalism promoted by the romantics that sustained a vision of national unity which, as Birken argues, 'was not so much a result of as a stand-in for German unification' (1994:138).

The course of the project of German unification in the nineteenth century essentially revealed the poverty and ineffectiveness of the German territories' political institutions in cultivating patriotic loyalty to a unified nation-state. If national identity could be found within stable political and institutional arrangements—the contractual model of the nation-state—there would have been no need to be preoccupied with the search for national character and identity that was the central feature of German nationalism. Thus, the promotion of national sentiment based on assumptions of the long-standing cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the German people ran alongside, rather than being part of, the more obviously political attempts to achieve territorial unification. The problem that confronted German nationalists was how to establish what the blueprint for national life should be given the diversity of regions and confessional divisions (James 1989:9).

The primary means for bringing together these 'diverse regions' was established through the triadic structure of nationalist rhetoric. Schulze points to a shift in consciousness with regard to the past, present, and future amongst the European nations that had its roots on the Enlightenment division between Church and state and the subsequent breakdown of traditional social hierarchies: 'people felt that the present

had speeded up furiously, giddily, dangerously; they felt deafened by the onslaught of new and unprecedented things which contrasted sharply with the earlier peacefulness of the unalterable and all-embracing sphere of ancient custom' (1991:39). The national past was thus a signifier of unity and the basis for the retrieval of the German character for many of the nationalists of the first part of the nineteenth century; because political unity was a distant hope, particularly in the aftermath of the Congress of Vienna, German intellectuals had to seek national unity through cultural and spiritual means

It was the German romantics who were important in establishing shared culture, language and traditions and then (after the middle of the century) shared race as the foundations for national unity as I will discuss in Chapter 7. Their vision proved enthralling and its persistence can be attributed to the cultural idealism of the German romantics and those whom they influenced. In the political geography of nineteenth-century Germany the national sentiment that began to seek a unified Germany was largely the creation of middle-class intellectuals (*Bildungsbürgertum*) amongst whom the German romantics were numbered. As Greenfeld and Chirot remark, the *Bildungsbürgertum* were a product of German universities who were 'supposed to enjoy higher status than the uneducated bourgeoisie' on the basis of their high level of education (1994:98). However, German societies at the time were structured along broadly feudal lines, and social mobility was therefore difficult, contributing to the sense of marginalisation felt by these intellectuals. Greenfeld and Chirot rightly attribute this feeling to the legacy of the Enlightenment which 'placed intellect high in the value hierarchy, boosted the self-esteem of intellectuals and encouraged their aspirations for an exalted place in society' (*ibid.*) and this was given further substance in the promise of the French Revolution to overthrow inequitable social arrangements. However, the Enlightenment emphasis on rational enquiry also contributed to a surplus of intellectuals and a consequent decline in opportunities, leading some of the *Bildungsbürger* to reject the promise of rational individualism and to turn instead to what became the romantic insistence on the *Völkisch* community as the repository of cultural and social value and as the main means of integrating individuals into cooperative society bound together by shared traditions and history (See Schulz 1991:46–48).

During the French occupation of the German territories during the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1812) the turn to romanticism was given further impetus as a number of key intellectuals—faced with the social upheavals wrought by French military aggression and influenced in both their social and aesthetic philosophies by Herderian organicism

and the awakening national consciousness fostered by the *Sturm und Drang* movement—expressed the need to re-establish hierarchical authority and stability based on the revival of tradition and ancient culture. The efforts of these native intellectuals were naturally welcomed by the rulers of the German territories who allied themselves with the rising nationalist sentiment expressed by the romantics, using their thought as a tool to cultivate popular resistance to the French menace prior to and during the German Wars of Liberation and in turn granting the romantic intellectuals an opportunity to identify with the ruling élite. As a result, as Greenfeld and Chirot note,

The Romantics presented the cause of the ruling élite as the “German cause”, and virtually overnight turned into German nationalists....[T]he Romantics were left in charge of shaping the German national consciousness and were able to define it in terms of the Romantic philosophy.

(1994:100)

In order to understand the relationship between nationalism and German romanticism it will be helpful briefly to summarise the broad chronology of the romantic movement and to list its main participants.

III. Romanticism and Nationalism: The Politics of Aesthetics

German romanticism is conventionally divided into the three phases of *Früh-, Hoch-, and Spätromantik* (early, high, and late romanticism),²³ although the distinctions between them are somewhat ambiguous, generally being marked by regional location rather than by any definitive shifts in philosophy, at least chronologically speaking. There were two areas, however, where significant differences in attitudes and approaches, particularly to the past, are discernable. The first concerned a confessional divide between those romantics who valorised a form of reconstructed medievalism, viewing the Roman Catholic Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages as the heyday of the German people, and those who sought to retrieve an altogether more ancient past, rooted in the ancestral paganism hinted at by Tacitus in the *Germania*, but nonetheless dependent on a Protestant belief that the German Reformation instigated by Martin Luther, amongst others, represented the triumph of the original and indigenous spirit of the German people. The second area of distinction was marked by divergences in approach to the form, content, and purpose of a national mythology. On the one hand, the literary-aesthetic rhetoric of the *Frühromantik* scholars sought to overcome the Kantian division between the ideal and material realms (discussed below) by advocating an abstracted

²³ This survey of the development of romantic thought in Germany is primarily derived from the following sources: Brown 1979; Beiser 1996; 2003; Williamson 2004; Seyhan 1992.

synthesis between both philosophy and mythology; on the other hand, the scholarly concerns of the nascent field of German philology, represented by the members of the *Hochromantik* school, suggested that the creation of a national mythology had to be much more pragmatically concerned with demonstrating and retrieving the original unity of the German people through close attention to the forgotten texts of German history and the scattered remnants of custom and oral traditions that survived amongst the peasant classes. Both of these differences will be discussed more fully in the following chapter.

Initially an aesthetic movement with moral and broadly sociological dimensions, the *Frühromantik* philosophy flourished in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century predominantly among university students who gathered together in small groups in order to philosophise and write poetry together.²⁴ The most influential of these groups, the *Jenenser Romantische Schule* ('Jena Romantic School') which flourished during the period between 1797 and 1802, was led by Friedrich Schlegel in Jena and then later in Berlin, and included his brother August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767-1845) in whose house the circle of romantic thinkers met, the poet and novelist Novalis (1772-1801), the philosopher Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854), the theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the writer and critic Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder²⁵ (1773-1801), and the poet and novelist Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853). In the period between 1799 and 1801 the Schlegel brothers along with Novalis produced what were the first truly systematic definitions and programmes of romantic poetry in their periodical *Athenaeum* (1798-1800). Opposed to what he saw as the static nature of rationalist classicism which, after Immanuel Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* ('*Critique of Judgment*'; 1790), viewed the artist purely as a medium of the expression of objective beauty and imposed rigid rules on literary composition and form, Schlegel recommended that romantic poetry should instead foster and express the authentic, unbounded, and above all unique imagination of the poet, undeterred by any universal ideal of beauty. Schlegel's emphasis on the particularity of the poetic vision, and his attempt to theorise an aesthetic synthesis between different literary genres—poetry and prose, novels and literary criticism, and poetry and philosophy—was a clear echo of Herder's emphasis on the uniqueness of vernacular expression and his the fusion of the concepts of the *Volk* and *Humanität*. The synthesising nature of Schlegel's

²⁴ On romanticism during the *Frühromantik* period see Beiser 2003; 1996.

²⁵ Wackenroder was not a member of the Jena School but was an influential romantic thinker nonetheless particularly through his connection with Tieck.

literary theory became a defining feature of both early and late German romanticism as I will discuss in more detail below, and I will argue that it was emblematic of the romantic nationalist concern to achieve a unity between the particular (as represented by the various and diverse German territories) and the whole (the longed-for unified nation).

The *Frühromantik* preoccupation with aesthetic and literary theory has led some commentators²⁶ to downplay its political agenda, but, as Beiser suggests, the thinkers associated with the movement ‘subordinated the aesthetic and religious to ethical and political ends. They defined the highest good not as aesthetic contemplation but as human self-realization, the development of humanity’, and suggested that ‘this ideal is realizable only within society and the state’ (2003:xi). In other words, their ethical and political values regarding civil society and social topography informed their aesthetic philosophy rather than *vice versa*. Beiser, in my view, is thus correct to resist the attempt to see the *Frühromantik* as a purely aesthetic movement without any political implications or interest. As I will show in the Chapter 7, Schlegel’s extensive writing on the origins and structure of Sanskrit and its connection to social arrangements and human development indicated a strong investment in, or at the very least an argument for, the intimate relationship between aesthetic expression, sociality, and political identity. Moreover, his aesthetic theories regarding the desirability of a synthesis of genres were reflected in his idealistic conception of nationhood:

The concept of nation signifies that its members symbolically form an individual; unity in diversity and many differences; the state thus becomes a whole with rich divisions and guilds, resting in the nation which in itself is a unity through common origin, speech, customs and religion, while the peoples are combined in a hierarchically organized humanity like the states of Europe.

(in Szaz 1963:926)

The second phase of German romanticism, often referred to as *Heidelberger Hochromantik* (Heidelberg high romanticism) lasted roughly between 1803 and 1815. Although Heidelberg was initially the centre of this new stage of romantic effort, other groups were also active in Berlin, Dresden, Vienna (where the Schlegel brothers were teaching at the University following their departure from Jena in 1802), and in the Swabian city of Tübingen. In Heidelberg and then Berlin, the group was led by Ludwig Achim von Arnim (1781–1831), Clemens Brentano (1778–1842), who both left Heidelberg for Berlin after 1806, Joseph Görres (1776–1848), Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857), and Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (1777–1843), amongst others. In Dresden, Adam

²⁶ See Lovejoy 1916, 1917; Behler 1980; Simpson 1989.

Müller (1779-1829), Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), and Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811) were active and in Tübingen the group of romantic poets known as the *Schwäbischer Dichterkreis* consisted of Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862), Justinus Kerner (1786-1862), and Gustav Schwab (1792-1850). As a movement it arose as a direct response to French occupation of the German territories. Where the earlier *Frühromantik* period had been concerned—at least initially—with theorising a romantic aesthetic to counter the cosmopolitan influence of France on vernacular cultural forms, albeit with a broadly political motivation, the *Hochromantik* thinkers directed their work towards active political resistance by harnessing aesthetic theories towards nationalistic ends. As Eugene Anderson has remarked

...the young German Romanticists felt the danger to German culture from the French Revolution and Napoleon to be less political than intellectual and spiritual, and they endeavoured to oppose it by ideas....In the succeeding years the danger became acutely political, and the German Romanticists were compelled to subordinate their preoccupation with the widening of art and the enrichment of individual experience to social and political ideas and actions, particularly as formulated in nationalism and conservatism.

(1941:301)

Thus, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic invasions a number of key romantic thinkers gathered in Berlin, which fast became the most influential centre of the *Hochromantik* movement, where they actively participated in political mobilisation against French occupation, publishing reactionary periodicals and pamphlets, and establishing nationalist societies that sought to cultivate national sentiment amongst the general public. An important intellectual leader, previously admired as a philosopher by the Jena Romantics, was Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) who fired up the spirit of patriotism among the Berlin group with his *Reden an die deutsche Nation* [*Speeches to the German Nation*; 1807-08] touched on briefly in the previous chapter, delivered to an enthusiastic audience in occupied Berlin.

Fichte argued that the path to German unification had to start with the definition of national character: 'We must, to put it in one word, find character: for to have character and to be German is without doubt the same thing (in James 1989:47). For Fichte, national education (*Bildung*) was the best means to produce German character, reflecting his belief that cultural values and traditions were not the product of institutions but rather of their transmission from one generation to another in a long chain of continuity (Kohn 1949a:335). Nationalism was thus conceived by Fichte as an educational enterprise and he believed that the transmission of national character

should be pursued hermetically, uninfluenced by foreign cultures (Kohn 1949a:331).²⁷ In so proposing, he continued the logic of Herder's arguments regarding the legacy of the *Volk*. The predominant characteristic of German identity for Fichte was its autochthony and originality, and he suggested in his famous eighth 'Address to the German Nation' that this placed the German people in a unique position amongst the European nations:

the German alone—the original, not the institutionalized withered man [*der ursprüngliche und nicht in einer willkürlichen Satzung erstorbene Mensch*]²⁸ has truly a nation, and...he alone is titled to count upon one, and...he alone is capable of loving his nation in the true way according to reason.

(in Kohn 1949a:326)

For Fichte, it was in the ancient past that the Germans would rediscover themselves and, further, he claimed that this indigenous character retrieved from the past would be foundational to the creation of the nation-state against the contractual view that saw the nation-state as the crucible in which national character was produced (Kohn 1949a:324).

It was the lessons of the past that revealed the German people's providential mission in the present, in particular the idea that Germany would lead the other European nations in establishing the perfect state based on a unity of language, culture and spirit. As Kohn suggests, for Fichte, 'only the Germans could have a true culture, only they could bring the great historical movements to fruition' (1949a:334). Fichte provided proof for his thesis by recalling the achievements of Luther in the Reformation, suggesting that he transformed Christianity into a religion that accorded with the indigenous spirit of the people and attested to their vitality and continuous stability. He also poured scorn on the state-building efforts of the French in the aftermath of the Revolution suggesting that they were not a nation by nature but rather by the vicissitudes of history (Kohn 1949a:340). Against this apparently manufactured and therefore novel form of nationalism, Fichte conjured up an image of the ancient Germans led by Arminius who had resisted Roman imperialism in conformity to their natural and indigenous desire for freedom:

Freedom meant to them just this: remaining Germans and continuing to settle their own affairs, independent and in accordance with the original spirit of their race, going on with their development in accordance with the same spirit, and propagating this independence in their posterity.

(in Kohn 1949a:341)

²⁷ See also Kaufmann 1942:465–466.

²⁸ I would instead translate this phrase as 'the original and not any arbitrarily constitutionalised and dying man', which conveys better Fichte's disdain for contractual nationalism represented by the French against whom he contrasted the 'natural' national spirit of the Germans.

An important marker of the Germans' natural autochthony, for Fichte, was the purity of their language. His *Addresses to the German Nation* were written in an antiquated Lutheran style and actively avoided the use of loan words from other languages (see Martyn 1997), indicating that his call for Germans to resist foreign influence in their customs was mirrored and exemplified in his obvious concern to resist foreign influences on the German language. He frequently warned his compatriots against falling prey to the false seductiveness of foreign words, and believed that the failure to preserve the purity of the German language would result in the loss of the nation's uniqueness, the 'decimation' of its culture and sense of the world (1967:114–115). Thus, Fichte followed the Herderian concept that a people's language carried with it their specificity and ensured the continuity of their values and their unique understanding of the world. German, for Fichte, had developed continually from 'the original starting point of language as a natural force' and it had been spoken 'without interruption' by the same people. Moreover, he believed that 'no element has ever come into it that did not express an actual perception that had been made by this people' (in Martyn 1997:311). He was able, therefore, to invoke the uniqueness of the German language to prove the uniqueness of the people who spoke it. Because the Germans had 'continually form[ed] their language in continuous communication with one another' they were 'an original people [*Urvolk*], one that has the right to call itself the quintessential people [*das Volk schlechtweg*] as opposed to other tribes that broke off from it' (*ibid.*). In summary then, for Fichte, the core features of the German national character were its natural affinity with ideals of freedom, its ability to transmit itself unchanged across the generations, and the unique purity of its language and as a race. The way to retrieve the German character was to seek it in ancient narrative traditions, to educate the population in Germany's glorious history, and to preserve the purity of the German language.

Fichte's patriotism and the Jena romantics' call for a national mythology (which I will examine in more detail below), was reflected in a number of simultaneous efforts to collect and anthologise traditional folklore and myths of the German peoples to stimulate national sentiment at a time of crisis. Arnim and Brentano published traditional songs in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (*The Youth's Magic Horn*; 1805–1808) with the express purpose of propagating *Volkspoesie* (folk poetry). The Grimm brothers (Jakob, 1785–1863 and Wilhelm, 1786–1859) joined this trend with their collection of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's- and Home Fairy-Tales*; first published 1812–1815); and Görres,

the first university professor to lecture on German literature, rounded out these cultural endeavours with his landmark essay *Die Teutschen Volksbücher* (*On German Chapbooks*; 1807). However, the chief activities took place in Heidelberg, where a couple of famous romantic teams embarked on the collection and emendation of the German people's oral traditions. I will discuss these efforts in the following chapter.

The late romantic phase (*Spätromantik*) began after the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815) and ended with the rise of *Junges Deutschland* (*Young Germany*, c. 1835) movement, led by Turnvater Jahn (1778–1852), which was a radical protest movement against all things romantic, but one that was, nonetheless, indebted to the vision of Germany that the earlier romantics had promoted. This late phase, led by Franz Bäder (1765–1841), E. T. A. Hoffman (1776–1822), Johann von Eichendorff (1788–1857), Görres, and the ageing Friedrich Schlegel, is generally characterised as marking a turn to conservatism and a return to religion, particularly Roman Catholicism. Frederick Beiser explains this development in terms of a continuity in some of the romantics' interest in medieval religion that had certainly been a feature in the writings of the *Frühromantik* phase:

If we carefully examine the chief documents regarding the romantics' early flirtation with the medieval church...then we find many reasons for their sympathy with it. The medieval church gave people a sense of community; it represented the highest spiritual values; it taught, and to some extent even practised, an ethic of love, the noblest moral philosophy; and, above all, it inspired and gave pride of place to art....The early romantics' sympathy for the Catholic Church was primarily a love for a medieval *ideal*, not an approval of, still less a conversion to, the actual historical institution.

(1996:xxii)

Despite the political upheavals that marked this period, the ageing romantics still managed to promote a mostly homogeneous agenda centred around Friedrich Schlegel in Vienna and Görres in Munich. After his conversion to Catholicism (1808), Schlegel served in the Metternich administration and, with the support of his Catholic friends, developed a conservative program for political restoration in Germany in his journal *Concordia* (1820–1823). Catholicising tendencies were also the mark of his lectures during this period (for example, *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur* [*History of Ancient and Modern Literature*, 1815]). Görres too changed from a young rebel to a conservative Catholic, supporting Germany's return to a quasi-medieval society from his professorship in Munich. His colleagues Franz von Bäder and Friedrich Schelling similarly lauded the emotional authenticity of German medievalism.

Although German romanticism was a dispersed and somewhat amorphous movement, in my view three core, intertwined themes are nonetheless discernable, each

of which illuminates the connectedness of romantic theories of aesthetic production to the cultivation of nationalist sentiment, and the relationship of the formulation of a united German identity to a myth of origins built upon patrilinear models of community that will be further explored in the following chapters. These were, firstly, a promotion of synthesising idealism as a solution to the atomistic individualism of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism; secondly, a strong belief in the providential purpose of the German peoples derived from the recuperation of their mythic narratives and heroes; and thirdly, a nostalgic preoccupation with the retrieval of a golden age of German unity and strength. In the remainder of this chapter I will discuss the synthesising imperative of the Jena romantics, the resulting call for a ‘new mythology’, and its relationship to the unificatory idealism of early nationalists. The next two chapters will then examine the nostalgic recovery of ancient vernacular folklore and myth traced through its survival in contemporary folklore undertaken by the Heidelberg romantics, and the consequent glorification of the German past through the sacralisation of the landscape.

IV. Synthesis: Philosophy and the ‘New Mythology’

I showed in Chapter 2 how the creative tension between Herder’s notion of the specificity of the *Volk* and his underlying belief in the synthetic unity of *Humanität* informed his theories of cultural organicism. Herder’s work exercised a profound influence on the way nationalist sentiment in Germany was organised around a principle of cultural (rather than political) unity, enabling romantic thinkers to oppose Enlightenment cosmopolitanism with a particularly Germanic notion of synthesis, where diversity and unity were finely balanced and directed towards a distinct conception of nationhood. Friedrich Schlegel, in the process of developing a romantic aesthetics for literature, was the amongst the first of the romantics—along with the German Idealist²⁹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775–1854), and Georg

²⁹ Idealism, while related to romanticism and its resistance to Enlightenment pure rationalism, is quite distinct from it, as Bowie carefully shows. He places Schelling as the paradigmatic Idealist, along with the early Fichte, suggesting that the Idealist response to the divisions in modernity that are rooted in Enlightenment rationalism is to seek new philosophical foundations on the basis of the Cartesian and Kantian conception of the founding role of self-consciousness. For Idealism, what philosophy can analyse in the activity of consciousness is a higher form of the intelligibility present in nature, so that the task of philosophy is to show how thinking is the key to the inherent intelligibility of things (Bowie 2003a:63). The difference that marks out romantic thought, as represented by Friedrich Schlegel, is ‘a realisation that, while it must play a vital role in a modern conception of philosophy, the activity of consciousness is never fully transparent to itself. It can therefore never be finally incorporated into a philosophical system because what we can consciously know of ourselves does not exhaust what we are’ (*ibid.*). Although Schelling wrote

Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), at least in the early years of his scholarship—to call for modern German literature to have a mythological basis derived from Herder’s organicist trajectory, and he advocated the need for a ‘*neue Mythologie*’ (‘new mythology’; 1798–1800, III:96) in his *Gesprache über die Poesie* (1800):

Our poetry, I claim, is missing a centre in the way that mythology was, for the ancients, completely necessary, so much so that modern poetry is inferior to that of the ancient, and can be summarised in the words: We do not have a mythology.
(1800:95)

The term ‘new mythology’ seems first to have appeared in a two-page manuscript in the young Hegel’s handwriting called ‘Oldest System Program of German Idealism’, first published in 1917 by Franz Rosenzweig and probably written around 1796. Rosenzweig initially attributed it to Schelling, but a recent consensus amongst scholars of German Idealism³⁰ has suggested that its author was in all likelihood Hegel, as between 1796 and 1797, unlike Schelling who did not write on mythology until after 1800, he wrote a good deal on the issues of religion, mythology, and, influenced by Herder, called for the revival of a national mythology (Williamson 2004:57).

The ‘System Program’ is something of a manifesto for a new type of philosophy that is an implicit response to Kant’s critique of metaphysics, wherein the concepts of understanding and reason, and reason and the senses were separated. The new philosophy of the ‘Program’ seeks to reunite these two metaphysical aspects of human being-in-the-world while at the same time affirming Kant’s insistence on the human capacity for self-determination. The author begins by outlining a new ethics founded on the *a priori* supposition concerning the self as a conscious and ‘an absolutely free being’ (in Bowie 2003b:334) from which relating to the world through understanding becomes the task of rational individuals. The text then moves abruptly to a call for a ‘new

extensively on mythology and maintained strong links with the Jena romantics, my concern in this chapter is to trace the connections between mythology or myth and the cultivation of German national identity at a more prosaic level than that represented by Schelling’s philosophical work. For summaries of Schelling’s interest in myth and his relationship to German romanticism see Bowie 2003a:49–68, 102–139; Williamson 2004:59–71.

³⁰ I am referring to it as *German* Idealism in order to distinguish it from the earlier idealist philosophy of George Berkeley (1685–1753). German Idealism was premised on the idea that although objectivity depends upon a subject which constitutes an object as an object of truth in a judgement, the subject does not create the material which is judged to be the object at issue. The central question of German Idealism, therefore, was how what the subject does relates to the nature of which it is a part. This lead to questions both about whether there is subjectivity at all, rather than there just being a world which does not come to know itself, and about the status of the forms of thinking in relation to forms in the rest of nature. Schelling developed these ideas most explicitly in his work on *Naturphilosophie*, most notably in *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur als Einleitung in das Studium dieser Wissenschaft* (‘Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature: As Introduction to the Study of this Science’; 1797). See Dancy 1987; Pappas 2000.

physics' to which ethics must be connected. It turns next to the state as a 'mechanical' organism which denies the freedom of people by treating them as a 'piece of machinery' and which therefore must be superseded and deals with the 'Ideas of a moral world, divinity, immortality', rejecting the mediating function of the priesthood 'which has recently been feigning reason, by reason itself' (*ibid.*). Finally, towards the end of the section, it introduces the 'idea that unites all ideas, the idea of *Beauty*, taken in the higher Platonic sense' (*ibid.*), which, as Bowie suggests, is intended 'to overcome the gap between laws of nature constituted via the understanding and what reason is to do with this endless diversity of particular laws' (2003a:57)—that is, to achieve a synthesis of all other ideas, of the individual, the state, morality, and the laws of nature. Thus, according to the 'System Program' the

philosopher must possess just as much aesthetic power as the poet [*Dichter*]....Poetry thereby gains a higher dignity, at the end it again becomes what it was at the beginning—*teacher of (History) Mankind*; for there is no philosophy, no history any more, poetry alone will survive all the remaining sciences and arts.
(in Bowie 2003b:334)

It is at this point that the 'new mythology' is announced, one that will fuse philosophy and poetry, monotheism and polytheism, art and science, and the individual with others into a great work of synthesis that will herald the 'greatest work of mankind':

First I shall speak here of an Idea which, as far as I know, has never occurred to anyone—we must have a new mythology, but this mythology must be in the service of the Ideas, it must become a mythology of reason. Before we make the Ideas aesthetic, i.e. mythological, they are of no interest to the people and on the other hand before mythology is reasonable the philosopher must be ashamed of it. Thus enlightened and unenlightened must finally shake hands, mythology must become philosophical and the people reasonable, and philosophy must become mythological in order to make the philosophers sensuous. Then eternal unity will reign among us.

(in Bowie 2003b:335)

What is interesting about this statement is its repudiation and reversal, in barely veiled terms, of the Platonic division of *logos* as rationalism and *muthos* as superstition and whimsy. Instead it calls for a union of *logos* as practiced by rational philosophers, that is, reason, and *muthos* as represented by poetry and the imagination—sensibility—held in trust by the common people. Again, this is an implicit response to Kant, particularly with regard to his distinction between the beautiful and the sublime mentioned in section III above. The 'System Program' is concerned to connect general aesthetic rules to the meaning those rules have for human ontology against Kant's approval of abstraction in the figure of the sublime. Thus, a key undercurrent in the 'System Program' is an argument that philosophy without an aesthetic sensibility and

instead founded on understanding's quantitative, rule-bound determination of objects, disregards the sensuous specificity of objects and the ways in which they may meaningfully concur with each other (Bowie 2003a:58). Against philosophical abstraction, the 'System Program' suggests a demotic means of uniting 'the masses' with philosophers.

For the author of the 'System Program', works of art which articulate and reflect collective concerns, and which also retain something of the status of cult objects, are accordingly regarded as having the potential to reunite a world which the abstractions that govern the modern era have begun to pull apart. As such, the 'System Program' presents a challenge to the atomising premises of Enlightenment individualism, but rather than seeking to overthrow the rational basis of human ontology inscribed in Enlightenment thought, it seeks to unite it with sensuality, with a kind of natural being-in/towards-the-world. As Peter Szondi states, 'One could say crudely that the philosophy of German Idealism tried to win back via the path of speculation what Kant's criticism had to renounce: the unity of subject and object, of mind and nature' (1974:221). This notion of a 'new mythology' as articulated in the 'System Program' appears to have oriented Friedrich Schlegel's own aesthetic theories of literature and art towards the Idealist retrieval of myth as philosophy. However, he moved away from the agenda of the 'System Program' by loosening the connection between aesthetics and ethics, and stressing instead the centrality of the new mythology as a purely aesthetic phenomenon. Although he believed that this new mythology would be derived from the mythologies of Greece and India, and would also be built upon the exemplary works of Goethe, Dante, and Shakespeare, and although he made no specific mention of Germanic myth at this stage, he had earlier suggested that old German literature might well provide a valuable mythological foundation for modern literature when he urged his contemporaries to

...follow the example which Goethe constructed, to investigate the forms of art as far as their origin in order to be able to revive or connect them, and [to] trace back to the sources of their own language and literature, [in order] to set the ancient vitality and high spirit free again which currently slumbers unrecognised in the ancient national documents from the *Nibelungenlieder* [Song of the Nibelungen] up to Flammig and Weckherlin.

(in Williamson 2004:86)

August Schlegel developed Friedrich's theories regarding this mythological foundation for German literature and he recommended German chapbook³¹ and medieval European epic as the 'chivalric and Christian mythology' (1884, III:17) upon which modern German literature should be modelled. August Schlegel believed that the medieval ethic of chivalry was essentially German in character, being for him, 'nothing other than the primordial German manliness (bravery, courage) tamed by Christendom' (*ibid.*). I will return to August Schlegel's penchant for chivalric medievalism as a marker of Germanic virtue in the following chapter.

Although initially both the Schlegels were concerned with defining an aesthetic agenda for the development of contemporary German literature that would, nonetheless, have implications for national cohesion in the political arena, during the French occupation of the German territories they began to champion the revival of Germanic mythology for patriotic reasons, seeing it as the repository of the German national spirit and a means to unite the divided German states.³² Their work in this regard laid the foundation for the activities of influential romantic folklorists which I will discuss in the following chapter. The broader implications of the notion of synthesis found within the 'System Program' and in Schlegel's own call for a new mythology had striking parallels in debates about the form and parameters of the German nation. While I have found no literature that makes explicit the link between German idealism's advocacy of synthesis and broader debates about the unity of the German people along the model of Herder's cultural organicism, it seems to me that there are grounds for some speculation regarding their connection.

The abstract synthesising imperative of the Jena romantics certainly found a more pragmatic voice in the work of Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769–1860), an influential nationalist during the Napoleonic era. He linked national identity to the mobilisation of a common German spirit, regardless of regional or religious differences, particularly in his treatise *The Spirit of the Age* (1807–1818) where he declared that 'The whole German Volk in brotherly union...must learn to feel how great, powerful, and fortunate their fathers were in obedience to *one* German emperor and *one* Reich, when the many feuds had not yet incited them against one another' (in Levinger and Lytle 2001:184). In the

³¹ Chapbooks were cheap, pocket-sized texts that included a variety of ephemera: pamphlets, political and religious tracts, nursery rhymes, folktales, children's literature and almanacs. They were an important medium for the dissemination of popular culture to the common people, especially in rural areas, providing entertainment, information and (generally unreliable) history.

³² See A. Schlegel 1846, VI:433; VIII:145–149.

absence of a powerful central state, the collective cultural and spiritual unity that characterised his conception of the nation had to be established from and through the common people who alone could provide the vernacular foundation for natural unity. Arndt synthesising tendencies sought to bring into balance the competing interests of the individual and the nation that characterised and, in his view, weakened cosmopolitanism (see Kohn 1949b:801).

As in the work of Fichte, the basis of natural unity, and by implication the true German character, was to be found in the purity of its language and racial descent. The conception of a *natural* unity bore the hallmark of the German Idealist concern, as articulated in the 'System Program', to unite 'philosophers' and the 'masses' and to bring together emotion and reason into a holistic vision of aesthetic and cultural unity. It was thus language and race that formed the uniting bond among all Germans and constituted them as a nation, an ambition that was reflected in the aims of the proposal for a '*neue mythologie*'. Moreover, for Arndt, the Germans stood above all other nations; the purity of their language and race guaranteed their creative superiority:

The Germans are not bastardized by alien peoples, they have not become mongrels, they have remained more than many other peoples in their original purity and have been able to develop slowly and quietly from this purity of their kind and nature according to the lasting laws of time; the fortunate Germans are an original people. For our ancestors we have a great piece of evidence from one of the greatest men who ever lived, from the Roman Tacitus. This extraordinary man who with his prophetic eyes penetrated the depth of the human heart and the depths of nature, the present time and the future, clearly saw the worth of our fathers, and prophesied their splendid future; and so far history has not contradicted him. But of all the things he saw most clearly how important it was for the future greatness and majesty of the German people that they were pure and resembled only themselves, that they were no mongrels.

(in Kohn 1949b:791–792)

Arndt makes a clear connection between the glorious past of the German people and their 'splendid future', and clearly believed that original purity equated to unity, that it was both the guarantor and the evidence for German homogeneity. As such, language and race were synthetically intertwined as the basis of German unity (see Kohn 1949b:792–793).

Arndt used his conception of language as a unifying force to establish the basis upon which the different regions of Germany could be brought together. His poem 'Was ist der Deutsche Vaterland' ('Where is the German Fatherland?'), which became the anthem of German nationalist resistance during the French occupation and later of the German youth movement established by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778–1852), called

upon the Germans to create one fatherland out of all the lands where German was spoken:

Where is the German's fatherland?
Then name, oh, name the mighty land!
Wherever is heard the German tongue,
And German hymns to God are sung!
This is the land, thy Hermann's land;
This, German, is thy fatherland.

(in Tappan 1914, VII:277)

The earlier sections of the poem list the various regions of Germany and states that the fatherland is not to be found in any one of them (the 'fatherland is not bounded so'). However, Arndt did root his patriotism in the German soil, valorising the peasant classes as the soul of Germany but equally lauding the cultural achievements of the middle classes. As such he sought to encourage a fraternal bond between the classes, urging his fellow Germans to identify with the *Volk* in order that divisions between them would be dissolved in the service of a higher purpose, and he did so in terms that invoked a strong motif of patrilinearity in that they naturalised paternal descent and associated it with fraternal feeling for the nation:

German man, feel again God, hear and fear the eternal, and you hear and fear also your *Volk*; you feel again in God the honor and dignity of your fathers, their glorious history rejuvenates itself again in you, their firm and gallant virtue re-blossoms in you, the whole German fatherland stands again before you in the august halo of past centuries!....[T]he whole German folk in brotherly community...must learn to feel how great, mighty, and happy their fathers were in obedience to one German emperor and one Reich, at a time when the many discords had not yet turned one against the other...above the ruins and ashes of their destroyed fatherland they must weepingly join hands and pray and swear all to stand like one man and to fight until the sacred land will be free.

(in Kohn 1949b:798)

Zoltan Szaz suggests that Arndt forms a bridge between the 'cultural concept of the German nation in the Goethe era and the new age, which demanded the creation of a German nation-state by military and political as well as by cultural means' (1963:927). However, in my view his contribution was rather to bring the two ideas into harmony, to suggest that cultural unity could and should lead to political unity. Arndt's ideas were shared by his contemporary Jahn, whose activities I will return to briefly in Chapter 6. He argued for national unity—the synthesis of regional differences into national cultural unity—through a programme of 'national education' and the reestablishment of the racial purity of the German people as recorded by Tacitus, and through the cultivation of *Volkstum* ('national traditions') a term he is thought to have coined (Szaz 1963:928). Jahn defined the *Volkstum* as 'that which the *Volk* has in common, its inner existence, its dynamism, its ability to propagate. Because of it their [*sic.*] courses

through the veins of the people a *völkisch* feeling and thought, love and hatred, intuition and faith' (*ibid.*). Like Arndt, Jahn also advocated linguistic and racial purity as the basis of national unity, and helped to establish the first 'Language Purification Society' (*ibid.*). As such, both Arndt's and Jahn's efforts fit Levinger's and Lytle's triadic model of nationalist discourse. As they suggest, 'Arndt's rhetoric is paradigmatic in this respect....The goal of being "German" is accomplished by overcoming the divisions of the population into Catholics and Protestants, Prussians and Austrians and so forth' (2001:185).

The significance of the synthesising effort of the early German romantics, whether pursued as an aesthetic programme or as a politically directed attempt to describe the natural unity of the German people, is that it was almost entirely imaginative. The divisions between the German people on the basis of religion and region remained a political reality, even after the unification of 1871. Consequently, it was left to the romantics to create an aesthetic basis upon which German unity could be manufactured and this took the form of a nostalgic attitude towards the German past, as I will now explore in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

NOSTALGIA, AUTHENTICITY, AND ROMANTIC NATIONALISM: THE (RE)INVENTION OF GERMAN IDENTITY

In this chapter my concern is to trace, in the context of the early- to middle-nineteenth-century German romantic nationalism surveyed in the previous chapter, the particular set of characteristics and consequences that were a specific example of the broader European preoccupation with ancient origins that I examined in Chapter 3. I will show how the politics of German identity during this period were built upon a nostalgia for a golden age of German achievement and were epitomised by the romantic effort to recover vernacular myths as repositories of ancient German character and values. In the next chapter I will examine how these myths were transferred into national symbols within the German landscape. Thus, this chapter examines the nostalgic recuperation of folklore in early nineteenth-century Germany and I pay particular attention to the work of the Grimm brothers and those of their circle, analysing how the rhetoric of authenticity they employed in their reconstruction of the German past—aided by the interpretative tools developed in the new fields of philology and ethnography—functioned in partnership with a conservative view of gender hierarchy to bolster the fusion of folklore and myth with the project of German nationalism.

I. Nostalgia and the Collection of Folklore

I showed in Chapter 1 the degree to which nostalgic imaginings of the past underpinned the romantic worldview, one which provided nationalist yearnings throughout Europe with specific content, form, and future vision. In the context of German romantic nationalism, this nostalgia took a number of forms, most notably the recovery of vernacular literature and oral folklore traditions with a concomitant valorisation of the *Volk*; monumental, artistic, and festive celebrations of the story of Arminius as told in Tacitus' *Germania*; and a programme of revisionist history that stressed the unique history of the German people by eulogising the Reformation and Germany's particular brand of medieval Christianity, fuelling the belief in Germany's providential role in world history. Each of these endeavours served to provide the German people with a positive image of themselves as unique, noble, and ancient, and, furthermore, offered a

foundation upon which a fundamental bond with their landscape and with each other could be asserted. In this and the following chapter I will focus particularly on the recovery of vernacular folklore and the celebrations of the figure of Arminius as exemplars of German nationalist/romantic nostalgia, and examine the way in which this nostalgic retrieval of myth provided the building blocks for a revived German national identity.

Feldman and Richardson suggest that the renewed romantic interest in myth and folklore (a distinction that was, for the romantics, by no means clear cut as I will show when I discuss Jakob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* in the following chapter) was a result of 'a growing sense of the loss of tradition and belief, of deepening division within the self and between the self and the world, and of political and national pressures' (1972:303). Vernacular myths and folklore (*Märchen*)¹ were seen to offer a mnemonic device that would recall to the German people their ancient pedigree and would provide a unifying source that would ease the sense of fragmentation and instability confronting the German territories in the early years of the nineteenth century. This was in part because the romantics believed that these narrative forms were uniquely placed to convey the authentic and ancient voice of the German people. Moreover, at the more abstract level of romantic philosophy as exemplified in the work of Friedrich Schlegel, Hölderlin, and Schelling, myth was seen as a redemptive mode for restoring to humanity its lost primal unity; myth, as Feldman and Richardson argue, for these German romantics offered a synthesising

key to reconciling the intensely felt dualities of necessity and freedom, finitude and infinity, sensuousness and divinity....The final goal of myth [was] often described as striving to make wholly conscious, universalised and free what in the original myths was only unconscious, instinctual, blindly necessary, or partial.

(1972:304)

A huge amount of effort went into collecting, editing, and preserving traditional tales, proverbs, and songs. Their retrieval fed into a broader programme initiated by the

¹ Stith Thompson defines *Märchen* as 'tale[s] of some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes. [They move] in an unreal world without definite locality or definite characters and [are] filled with the marvellous. In this never-never land humble heroes kill adversaries, succeed to kingdoms and marry princesses' (1977:8). See also Luke 1982:9–20. Tully draws attention to a subdivision in the genre of *Märchen*: *Volksmärchen* ('folktales') which 'claims to originate from the "people" itself' and *Kunstmärchen* ('literary fairytale') which she defines as a 'specifically literary branch of the *Märchen* genre inspired by traditional oral narrative' and which is thus a simulation of folktales (1997:28). See also Ziolkowski 1992. The romantic compilers of German folktales did not refer to their work as *Kunstmärchen*, preferring *Märchen* instead, but, as I will show, the term *Kunstmärchen* is an accurate designation, both in terms of their articulated purpose and the editing and forms of retelling undertaken.

romantic thinkers amongst the *Bildungsbürgertum* of manufacturing a sense of social cohesion against the backdrop of the political upheaval caused by the Napoleonic invasions and the wider revolutionary sentiment that was threatening absolute monarchism in Central Europe in the early nineteenth century. The *Märchen* genre was traditionally associated with the domestic arena, and its oral transmission within the family home, usually by an elder, was intended to impart specific moral lessons that would foster a sense of shared community values (Tully 1997:28). Thus its collection was an implicitly didactic strategy for social management (Hobsbawm 1994:9) in that many of the collectors believed that the establishment of vernacular literary canons and traditions would enable a German audience to recognise and associate itself with a specifically German paradigm ostensibly based upon long-established 'national' values and modes of behaviour that advocated community and social stability. As Tully suggests,

The means to express the Romantic paradigm...required the development of genres which would both impact upon and inform the reader without being overtly political. In order to bolster traditional values, the implicit didactic message...must not be seen to step outside that tradition but should instead make use of it as a vehicle for moderate reform.

(1997:26)

As such, the romantics sought to elevate their native storytelling traditions in order both to champion indigenous democratic values amongst the German people, and to cultivate nationalist sentiment, pride, and cohesion.

Tully points to a well-established, and familiarly rationalist attitude towards the didactic role of *Märchen* in Germany when she suggests that

The Enlightenment in Germany, whilst disapproving of irrationality *per se*, found a use for the 'marvellous' as a means to transmit a didactic message, the intention of which, in the words of Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–66), was 'bey der Beulustigun zu bessern und zu lehren' [to improve and educate whilst entertaining].

(1997:27)

The romantic bourgeois idealisation of folktales thus drew on a common German understanding of the role of vernacular narrative genres in maintaining social cohesion but in contrast to the Enlightenment attitude, viewed them as the authentic and authoritative containers of national character.²

² Uli Linke (1990:119–124) points to an alternative and opposing attitude to the romantic view of folklore in nineteenth-century Germany, represented in the work of Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823–1897) amongst others. Riehl argued against the romantic compilers' ideological use and appropriation of folklore in their quest for national unification as well as their view that folklore was an authentic and homogenous repository of an abstracted Germanic spirit. Instead, he advocated closer scholarly attention to the actual social conditions and contexts in which folklore

One of the possible reasons these genres were viewed as a reservoir of national values and as models of social cohesion was because, as Susan Stewart has noted, the voices of tradition as found in folklore could speak through pronouns that seemed to emerge from ‘everyone and yet no one’: ‘As everyone, [these voices bear] upon the situation with the weight of tradition and traditional authority; as no one [they escape] the limitations and contingencies of biography and historical context’ (1991:83). As such, therefore, along with the implicit didacticism that strove to counter the ill effects of modernisation, folklore offered an immediate means of articulating what was already assumed to be, after Herder, the essential and timeless unity of the German people. Folklore was conceived of as monological, monovocal, and authentic. Nonetheless, despite its promotion as a unificatory medium, such a view served, perhaps unintentionally, to subordinate other voices, or, at the very least to appropriate them in the service of bourgeois visions of the national character, thus sublimating the threat posed by the contemporary reality of a class-ridden society by means of an appeal to unchanged tradition and a markedly non-specific past.

The recovery and collection of vernacular folktales and myth was viewed as an increasingly urgent task within the broader context of European romanticism. As the literary historian Anne Janowitz has noted, a feature of English romantic poetry was a melancholic preoccupation with crumbling ruins within the nation’s landscapes and this tended allegorically to indicate the loss of a nation’s sense of its past glory and the pressing need to preserve, if not restore, the fragile presence of archaic cultural forms: (1990:62–63). Like this allegorical representation of ruins, and the poetry about them

was produced and disseminated in order to ensure better government of populations, a practice generally styled as *Volkskunde* (‘population science’ or, more literally, ‘knowledge of the common folk’) as opposed to the romantic collection of *Volksmärchen*. For Riehl, a more contextualised, ethnographic understanding of folklore would enable the formulation of properly targeted cultural and administrative policies and folklore could thus be a tool of the state. Riehl’s approach owed much to earlier, mid-eighteenth-century German views regarding the art of governance, represented by thinkers such as Joseph Mader (1754–1815) and Gottfried von Achenwall (1719–1772) (Linke 1990:124–125). Linke makes the useful point, drawing on Foucault’s notions of the emergence of state surveillance and population control (1980), that ‘[s]tatistical folklore, as a human science, came into being at the moment when the procedures of surveillance and the taking of records were being established in an effort to secure the much-needed productivity of the populace in the service of economic development and military defence’ (1990:127). Linke, in my view however, draws too clear a distinction between ideological and political uses of folklore in this context. Both the romantic collectors and those who insisted on a more ethnographic model were motivated by a desire to inculcate particular virtues and modes of behaviour—conceived as authentically rooted in the common people—in the wider population for pragmatic political ends. Any difference between their views lay, rather, in their methods, the form their collection took, and whether they stressed generalised inspirational aspects of folklore (the romantics) or its particular informational quality (the ethnographers and administrators).

within the English scene, the recovery of vernacular folklore, conceived as a buried stratum of Germanic values, served in Germany to sacralise the nation even as this purported repository of the past appeared to be fast disappearing with the advent of modernity, industrialisation, and increasing urbanisation. As Abrahams has suggested, making the analogy between the symbolism of ruins and folklore explicit,

Recorded traditional songs and stories, proverbs, riddles, and other such genres....are epitomized, like the ruin in the landscape, as emptied history, experienced in terms of both the discovery of continuity in the tradition and the continuing loss of its bearers.

(1993:15)

Stewart agrees, suggesting that the renewed interest in folklore (during the late eighteenth century) was distinguished by its tendency to 'rescue forms that seem to be disappearing—that is, to effect a kind of archaeology of speech forms...[and] to place such specimens as curiosities, characterized by fragmentation and exoticism, against the contemporary' (1991:103).

Thus, folklore achieved rhetorical power through its ability to appear to touch the past, to preserve it, even as it encountered a present that was threatening its survival, and to provide solutions and models for a contemporary and future nation. The diagnosis of loss with its implicit aspiration towards a future restoration thus occupied a central place in the romantics' nationalist thinking on myth and folklore and enabled them to map a direction for action by delineating the salient dimensions of the national community. By retrieving what they believed to be the essential qualities of the original German community as conveyed by folklore and myth, the romantics were also able to identify what actually needed to be recovered from the past. Thus the construction of an original identity through recourse to narrative defined the boundaries of the nation-building effort.

II. Folklore as a Cult of Authenticity

The Schlegel's patriotic agenda surveyed in the previous chapter was both echoed and extended in the work of their contemporaries Brentano, Arnim, and the Grimm brothers, who believed, after Herder, that all traditional lore was the fragmented remains of an authentic body of German mythology that was in urgent need of restoration. They differed, however from the Schlegels with regard to the form of the past that mythology was thought to retrieve, an area of disagreement that, as I have mentioned, was indicative of a confessional divide between the Catholicism of the Schlegels and the Protestantism of, amongst others, the Grimm brothers (see Williamson

2004:77–78, 98–112). August Schlegel favoured a return to the heavily feudal medievalism of the Holy Roman Empire, which he believed contained a distilled and particularly Germanic³ form of Christianity. Jakob Grimm, in contrast, advocated the retrieval of a pre-Christian German primitivism and believed that what were exceptional or laudable practices or beliefs in medieval Christianity, at least as they were practised in Germany, were in fact survivals of a submerged pre-Christian paganism rather than being products of Roman Catholic Christianity or courtly chivalric customs.

As I suggested in Chapter 2, Herder had been one of the first scholars in Germany to encourage the collection of vernacular folktales and literature during the eighteenth century as a way of identifying and celebrating the indigenous character of any given *Volk*. Thus, during the eighteenth century a number of important collections had been undertaken by German scholars (see Tully (1997:27, fn. 66). However, it was a number of figures central to romanticism in nineteenth-century Germany—Novalis, Brentano and von Arnim, Ludwig Uhland, and the Brothers Grimm, amongst others—who undertook the most systematised and nationalistically motivated compilation of folktales.⁴

Two of the leading figures involved in the development of this early form of folkloristics were members of the *Hochromantik* school, Ludwig Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, who took an explicitly nostalgic attitude to folklore. They saw it as a crucial resource for achieving German cultural unification, contrasting its ‘authentic tone’ [*wahrer Ton*] to that of the artificiality of purportedly more civilised forms of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature which Arnim saw as ‘nothing but illness and annihilation [*Krankheit und Vernichtung*]’ (in Pfau 2003:56). He characterised their efforts to collect folk traditions as rescuing and mediating a heritage preserved—but dangerously imperilled—amongst the folk, using a familiar botanical analogy: ‘Where are the old trees under which even yesterday we found rest, the ancient signs of firm

³ For the purposes of this chapter, the term ‘Germanic’ is used to denote the broad group of peoples, languages, and cultures (within the German speaking territories of Central Europe and Scandinavia) whose linguistic history Jakob Grimm, in particular, charted in the *Deutsche Grammatik* (1819) and *Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache* (1848) and whose religion he sought to describe in the *Deutsche Mythologie*. Thus Danish mythology and folklore were popularly considered to be Teutonic (Germanic), as was Norse material.

⁴ In the last decade of the eighteenth century, Ludwig Tieck, a member of the Jena circle, had cultivated a renewed interest in folk- and fairytales, although without specifically emphasising their nationalistic potential and instead, similarly to the early work of the Schlegels, had focused on folklore’s aesthetic qualities in such a way that its utility for evoking a broadly romantic sentiment was obvious. Tieck produced a hybrid literary form—the *Kunstmärchen*—where traditional tales were recrafted as high literature. Tieck’s reworkings reflected a broader attitude that the simplicity and authenticity of native folklore lacked literary or aesthetic value in itself.

borders: what has happened, is happening to them? Almost forgotten by the people, we make contact with their roots' (in Pfau 2003:57). Arnim and Brentano's concern to rescue German folk traditions from an oblivion that was increasingly threatened by encroaching modernisation led them to publish their compilation and reworking of folksongs and poetry *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1806–1808) (Pfau 2003:59).

Arnim and Brentano advocated a need to rework folktales in order to enhance their aesthetic value for a modern audience. However, they confronted an uneasy tension between their belief in the redemptive resources that the 'timeless' past offered and the aesthetic requirements of a modern—albeit apparently alienated—audience. Their careful recrafting of traditional tales sought to transform the crude, simplistic, and often morally ambiguous language of folklore into literary works of art that would appeal to an educated reading public. They wanted to provide a didactic resource where moral ambiguities were resolved in starkly conservative, but aesthetically pleasing terms. They therefore portrayed folklore as the preeminent form of cultural memory and dressed their literary product up as tradition, creating—rather than retrieving—an *appearance* of authenticity that effectively endowed them with a strong hermeneutic role where they interpreted the form, function, and meaning of the past for their bourgeois audience. As such, their efforts exemplified the dialectical relationship between vernacular traditions and post-Enlightenment modernity, and between cohesive indigeneity and cosmopolitan fragmentation, which they sought to resolve through a nostalgic and patriotic programme of literary retrieval and synthesis.

III. Folklore and Nationalism: The Grimms' Kinder- und Hausmärchen

The clearest example of the use of folklore and myth for cultivating patriotic sentiment and evoking the cultural unity of the German people is to be found in the work of the Brothers Grimm. Best known for their collection of folktales, the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812–1815; henceforth *KHM*) discussed below, Wilhelm Grimm's *Altdänische Heldenlieder, Balladen, und Märchen* ('Ancient Danish Hero Songs, Ballads, and Fairytales'; 1811) was the first work that signalled what was to become for both brothers a lifelong commitment to their native folklore. Throughout their careers they published numerous other volumes on myth and folklore including their *Deutsche Sagen* ('German Legends'; 1816–1818), and produced a well-received edition of the *Prose Edda* (1815). Wilhelm Grimm's career centred on publishing folk literature and German myth, particularly his *Die deutsche Heldensage* (The German Hero Myths'; 1829) and *Über*

deutsche Runen ('On German Runes'; 1835); Jakob pursued two careers simultaneously: he was one of the great early German philologists as exemplified by his *Deutsche Grammatik* ('German Grammar') in four volumes (1819–1837) and the *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache* ('The History of the German Language'; 1848)⁵ while at the same time maintaining a keen interest in German mythology and early legal customs. As Feldman and Richardson remark, Jakob's 'philological studies began in and always remained complementary to his writings on myth' (1972:408). He published his *Deutsche Rechts-Älterthümer* ('Antiquities of German Law') in 1828, and more significantly, his massive four-volume collection *Deutsche Mythologie* in 1835, which I will discuss in the next chapter, followed by an extended second edition with an important preface in 1844 in which he advocated a comparative method for studying myth as a means of sifting out what was not natively Germanic. A fourth edition, with posthumous additions was published between 1875 and 1878.⁶

The Grimm brothers described their own efforts to retrieve vernacular folklore as an urgent salvage operation, stating in the preface to the *KHM* (1812) that

It is perhaps the right time to collect these fairy tales since those who have been preserving them are becoming invariably rarer...for the custom of telling tales is ever more on the wane, just as all the homely places in dwellings and gardens are yielding to empty splendour.

(1812:ixx)

The brothers started collecting folktales around 1806 at the behest of Brentano and Arnim, who were at the time collecting material for their *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. The Grimms compiled a manuscript of forty-nine tales and sent it to Brentano towards the end of 1810. However, they first had a copy made because they were concerned that Brentano would substantially alter the tales in order to craft them into *Kunstmärchen*, whereas the brothers, according to Jack Zipes, 'were intent on using the tales to ground their notions about German customs and wanted to preserve their originality' (1987:68). It is certainly fortunate that they did so, as most of the Grimms' own papers did not survive (Tully 1997:136) and Brentano never made use of the tales, abandoning the manuscript in the Ölenberg monastery in Alsace, where it was rediscovered in 1924, 1927, and then again in 1974 by Heinz Rölleke who published it, alongside the text and notes in the Grimms' own copy of the 1812 edition of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Zipes 1987:68; Tully 1997:138).

⁵ He also published the very influential *Deutsche Wörterbuch* with his brother Wilhelm in 1852 (Luke 1982:22).

⁶ The four volumes of the *Deutsche Mythologie* were published in English as *Teutonic Mythology*, translated by James Stallybrass between 1883 and 1888.

The reworking of folklore into a more literary style represented by Brentano and Arnim and the Grimms' apparent commitment to accurate and unadulterated transcription of folktales has suggested, for some scholars (see Luke 1982:24 and Tatar 1987:33), two distinct attitudes to vernacular traditions amongst the romantics. The Grimm brothers, unlike Brentano and Arnim, wanted to preserve the narrative heritage of Germany contained in folktales by transcribing them as unchanged as possible. However, the comparison of the various editions of the *KHM* with the surviving manuscript has shown that they too made numerous changes to the tales they published, and this has enabled scholars to chart the degree of alteration that the Grimms engaged in over the course of several editions of the tales (see Rölleke 1975; Ginschel 1967; Zipes 1987:68–70; Tully 1997:136–169) particularly, as Jack Zipes notes, with regard to

the endeavour to make the tales stylistically smoother, the concern for the sequential structure of the story, the dramatization of the tales to make them more pictorial, the reinforcement of the motives in the plots, the infusion of psychological elements, and the elimination of features that might detract from a fairy-tale tone that recalled miraculous events as though they were ordinary.

(1987:68)

Nonetheless, Jakob Grimm frequently stated his strong commitment to what were newly emerging philological principles of transcription and fidelity to sources, and because he believed that folktales and customs were the remnants of an original Germanic mythology, he argued that they should be recorded without too much alteration in form. The question of the degree to which the Grimms maintained this faithfulness to their sources, and the nature of the changes they made over the various editions, will be discussed below.

There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that the Grimms were motivated by nationalist sentiment. They were clearly affected by the upheavals of the Napoleonic invasions and, at least in the case of Jakob Grimm, wanted to be actively involved in resisting the French occupation (Wilhelm suffered poor health which hindered his participation although he was certainly aggrieved by the French invasions; see Tully 1997:142–149). Although the Grimms' patriotism seems first to have been centred around loyalty to their native Hessen which had been annexed to the newly created kingdom of Westphalia in 1807, the wider French occupation of the German territories resulted in an extension of their loyalties towards a form of pan-Germanic nationalism (Tully 1997:147–148). The brothers were representative of the particular character of German nationalism during this time, at least insofar as regional plurality was not seen

to be at odds with pan-German national unity but rather as dependent upon it. The Grimms thus believed that the basis for balancing provincial diversity with national unity was to be found in the cultivation of pan-Germanic literary and folk traditions, which would, in turn, promote social stability and strength. In the early years after the end of the occupation Jakob contrasted the stability of old German ways with the turmoil that the French had brought when he wrote, in terms that evoked the rural idyll of the past,

I think, however, if all goes well, God willing, then reading and writing in Germany will become gradually less political and so forth—instead, pious work, sowing and ploughing will once again be satisfyingly calm, which is indubitably better suited to us than the shrieking, irascible manner that the cursed French brought us.

(in Leitzmann 1923:134)⁷

Both brothers found a good deal of solace in their studies of German literature and customs. As Wilhelm later recalled:

The eagerness with which studies of old German culture were pursued also helped to overcome the oppressiveness of those times. Without doubt, world events and the need to withdraw into the peace of scholarship had contributed to the reawakening of that long forgotten literature; one sought in the past not only consolation but also the hope was natural that this direction would contribute to the return of another time.

(in Denecke 1985:172)

Jakob Grimm frequently stated his opposition to the French occupation and his dislike of the French people more generally (see Tully 1997:143–145), which he recalled in a letter to Johann Schmid, Mayor of Bremen in April 1837, where he too expressed his hope of a brighter future for a unified Germany:

Distrust and antipathy towards the French will remain firmly impressed upon those of us who belong to this generation, although we see things much more mildly than we did in 1813–15. As far as I am concerned, the feeling[s] will pass and proceed to the strengthened and secure awareness of our own German virtue without any resentment; then we [will] have nothing to fear. Such an awareness depends upon political unity which one day must again be achieved and there are many paths to this end, even though things appear gloomy.

(in Leitzmann 1923:49)

Jakob combined his scholarly activities with political involvement and was an important member of the National Assembly established in 1848. Through their studies the Grimms were able to articulate a vision of unity and stability for the Fatherland, the essence of which, as Tully suggests, was intended to be clearly visible in their *Märchen* collection (1997:149).

Against the background of the turmoil caused by the French occupation, the publication of the 1812 edition of the *KHM* was an immediate success, confirming the

⁷ See also Denecke 1985:181.

Grimms' hopes for the volume that it would introduce the general populace to the unifying aspects of old German customs. The popularity of the volume also brought an unanticipated benefit as readers in large numbers throughout Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and Switzerland began to send alternative versions of the published tales as well as new material to the Grimms (Luke 1982:27). They immediately set about putting together a second edition, published in 1815, and the two volumes together brought the number of tales to 156. A slightly revised edition, in two volumes, was published in 1819 with a third volume added in 1822 that contained the Grimms' elaborate notes listing their sources, as well German or foreign variants and parallels of the tales (Luke 1982:28). A further five editions appeared between 1837 and 1857 bringing the number of tales up to the 'canonical count' of 200 (Luke 1982:27–28, but see Zipes 1987:68); and Wilhelm Grimm, who had increasingly assumed responsibility for the *KHM* from 1815 onwards, was working on an eighth edition at the time of his death in 1859. In addition to the seven complete editions, from 1825 onwards, the Grimms also published a separate volume for children (*Kleine Ausgabe*, 'Shorter Edition') of what they considered to be the fifty most popular tales illustrated by the Grimms' brother Ludwig Emil (1790–1863).

The Grimms obtained many of their most popular tales from women (see Blackwell 1987:163, 172–173, fn. 11), reflecting, as Luke suggests, that 'Among their many sources, women rather than men seem to have been the most rewarding' (1982:27). In the first volume of the *KHM* Dorothea ('Dortchen') Wild, who later became Wilhelm's wife, was one of the main contributors. Her sisters and mother also contributed some tales, as did their old housekeeper Marie Müller (known as 'Alte Marie'). The collection of stories in the second volume was considerably aided by Frau Katharina Dorothea Viehmann (1755–1815), the most famous of the Grimms' sources. Viehmann was an innkeeper's daughter of Huguenot descent, who later married a tailor and who worked as an itinerant seller of household supplies which is how she came to the attention of the Grimm brothers. She had told her stories to the daughters of a Huguenot pastor in Kassel, where the Grimms were based, who in turn introduced her to the circle of romantic thinkers that included Brentano and the poet Annette von Droste-Hülshoff (1797–1848). It was Droste-Hülshoff, who herself collected stories for the brother, who recommended Viehmann to them, probably around 1812. Viehmann henceforward visited the Grimms in their study in Kassel and they came to enjoy her visits, affectionately referring to her as '*die Märchenfrau*' (Luke 1982:27–28 and Warner

1994:188–189). Ludwig Grimm sketched a portrait of her as a frontispiece that appeared in many popular editions of the *KHM* and which Marina Warner portrays as suggesting ‘an identity rooted in a particular soil’ where her wistful, dreamy expression ‘confirms Wilhelm’s express wish that the tales represented “the reawakening of the long forgotten literature”’ (1994:192).⁸

Altogether, Viehmann contributed nineteen of the brothers’ best tales (Luke 1982:27). In their preface to the second edition the Grimms gratefully acknowledged her input and praised her talents in terms that were indicative both of how they viewed their project and of their concern to stress the authenticity of their collection:

She has retained these old tales firmly in her memory...she told them carefully, confidently, and with great vividness, clearly enjoying them herself; at first she would be quite fluent, but if asked to she would then repeat them slowly, so that with a little practice one could write them down as she spoke. We have thus been able to preserve a great deal word for word...Anyone who supposes that tradition is easy to falsify should have heard how exactly she repeated each narrative and how she insisted on the correct version. She never altered anything during a retelling, and if she made a slip she correct it at once in mid-sentence.

(in Luke 1982:27)

IV. Authenticity, Invention, and Orality

Scholars of the Grimms’ tales have long debated the question of their authenticity, the related issues of the motives of the Grimm brothers in compiling their collection, and the nature of alterations they undertook (for an overview see Tully 1997:137–142). John Ellis and Alan Dundes have tended to the most negative view. Ellis has suggested that the Grimms and later scholars who followed them colluded in a thoroughly fraudulent exercise to uphold the brothers’ untarnished reputation. The tone of Ellis’ critique is worth some comment as it is indicative of the sharp division between the authenticity and the fabrication of folktales that is maintained in the contemporary field of folkloristics. He accuses the brothers of ‘deliberate deception’ (1983:26), of creating ‘an enormous discrepancy’ between the Ölenberg manuscript and the first edition (1983:38–39), claiming that the Grimms were ‘both lazier and much less scientifically conscientious’ in their collection practices than they led others to believe (1983:27). Ellis is at pains to show that they inflicted ‘damage’ on the tales (1983:62) through their

⁸ Marina Warner also describes another portrait produced of Viehmann by the artist Ludwig Katzenstein in 1892 that shows her in ‘her domestic setting surround by her children and grandchildren as the two scholars listen attentively’ (1994:191). The arrangement of the painting is clearly designed to emphasise the rustic, homely provenance of Viehmann’s tales which clearly chimed with the Grimm’s insistence on the *Völkisch* origin of their tales. Viehmann, however, as I have noted above, was neither a member of the peasant class nor did she relate her tales to the brothers in the domestic setting that Katzenstein’s painting suggests.

editing practices and frames his critique in overtly moralising terms: ‘the Grimms appear to have been *guilty* of a pervasive habit of tinkering idly and uninhibitedly with the language of the texts’ (1983:85; my emphasis). What is so interesting about Ellis’ attack on the Grimms is that he seems to assume a direct correlation between orality and authenticity and thus implies that the type of textualisation the Grimms undertook was a deliberate corruption of a once accessible original purity. In my view, the same rhetoric of authenticity that engaged the Grimms is thus here repeated in Ellis’ work. At a more general level, assertions that a particular text directly springs from a folk source and criticisms that it does not both seem to me to constitute implicit claims that printed texts not only can or should invoke the presence of the folk, but that this presence is a prerequisite to establishing the authority and the authenticity of those texts. Precedence is thus given to narratives that exist prior to their reproduction in print indicating a temporal prioritisation of the past over the present as well as a narrative hierarchisation based on constructions of truth and authenticity after the fact. Based on the justifications offered by the Grimms regarding their editorial decisions, I do not doubt that, at the very least, they believed they were being faithful to the tone and import of their sources. It seems to me, therefore, that Ellis’ critique is more indicative of the programmatic mission of the contemporary field of folklore that he is so clearly invested in than of the Grimms’ own calculated duplicity.

Alan Dundes, one of the few to support Ellis’ rather excessive and in places factually flawed critique, sees in the tales a manifestation of what became known, after Richard Dorson coined the term, as ‘Fakelore’ (1959). Dundes has claimed that the Grimms’ *Märchen* was made up of ‘spurious and synthetic writings’ which purported to be genuine folklore (1984:155–171). Other commentators have been less critical, seeking instead to find a less polemical explanation for the Grimms’ alterations, usually attributing them to a variety of external social factors (bourgeois social mores, for instance, which meant that the brothers had to downplay the more vulgar elements) (see Bottigheimer 1988 and Dégh 1990). Linda Dégh (1984), for example, has pointed out that the standards set by contemporary notions of folkloric authenticity have only been in circulation since the 1940s and that it is therefore anachronistic to apply them retrospectively to the Grimms’ practices. Her argument receives support from Zipes (1979:15–16) who similarly suggests that the rewriting of tales was a common practice in nineteenth-century folkloristics. However, in the preface to the first edition of the *KHM* the brothers stated that ‘We have tried to write down these tales as purely as

possible....No circumstance has been added through poetic efforts or embellished or changed, for we should have shied from augmenting tales that were so rich in themselves with their own analogy and reference. They cannot be invented' (in Zipes 1988:37). In the second edition a similar claim is made, although the brothers here do acknowledge some editorial intervention:

In regard to the way in which we collected the tales, it must be noted that first of all we were concerned with loyalty and truth, for we did not add anything on our own account, but did not beautify (idealise) the circumstances or traits of the tale. Rather, we have related the contents just as we had received them; it is self evident that the expression [exact wording] and the individual details stem from us, yet we have tried to preserve every unique element that we have observed.

(in Kamenetsky 1992:165)

Given the Grimms' repeated claims to be passing on tales in their original, authentic, and therefore purely Germanic form, and the role that the collection played in defining the German character, the extent to which they can be borne out needs to be assessed.

The question of what constitutes authenticity in the context of the early nineteenth-century collection of German folklore, particularly as practised by the Grimms, is important to understand here. Several criteria signified the basis for any argument in favour of a tale's genuineness: it had to be a faithful replication of both the tone and rustic concerns of the common people, unadulterated by elite ideas, and thus signifying autochthony, purity, and an unbroken transmission of earlier, but extant, oral traditions. As Marina Warner suggests, the German romantics generally, and the Grimms in particular, identified fairy tales 'with the spontaneous, innocent, untutored mind—with children and with ordinary, unsophisticated people. Both were pure, not-adult—literally unadulterated' (1994:188).

This emphasis on the childlike quality of folklore perhaps reflects a patronising attitude towards the 'common people', but it also symbolised the romantic concern both with retrieving the uncorrupted childhood of culture itself, and with the suitability of ancient lore for teaching children about their noble heritage. Jakob Grimm, in his review of a speech by Karl Besselt praising *Das Nibelungenlied*, certainly advocated old German poetry as a pedagogical tool firmly based in the domestic arena:

National history and poetry must be cultivated with the mother's milk, as it were, recounted and discussed before the child enters school and when he returns home....Children in so-called educational institutions are to be pitied, for when they spend the whole day earnestly learning they cannot hear the tales in the evening; nothing in the world can be substituted for homely parental familiarity.

(in Denecke 1985:142–3)

Such a view is a clear echo of Herder's theories regarding the role of the patriarchal family in maintaining tradition and, consequently, the natural order (*Naturordnung*) as discussed in Chapter 2.

The analogy drawn between childish innocence and folklore, and its importance for educating children and the general public in their national history and poetry, also enabled the prioritisation of orality over literacy, given that literacy was, if somewhat erroneously, connected to cosmopolitan modernisation and therefore the end of humankind's 'childhood' in a post-Enlightenment context. The broader cultural precedence granted to oral forms of storytelling emerged in the eighteenth century, in Germany at least, as one way of resisting French cosmopolitanism and, as Susan Stewart has noted, 'in order to imagine folklore, the literary community of the eighteenth century had to invent a folk, singing and dancing "below the level" of "conscious literary art"' (1991:102–103). This beguiling image of an uncorrupted, unchanging peasant community telling stories unaffected by the contamination of print and literacy, is, in other words, not only a late-eighteenth-century invention: it is a necessary one. Jochen Schulte-Sasse links this invention to the exigencies of eighteenth-century life when he argues that 'the mental structures of eighteenth-century thinking...share a cognitive feature that juxtaposes alienation, isolation, and the division of labor in modernity with an absent and longed-for state of communal solidarity or moral sensibility' (1985:102).

The Grimms thus continued the invention—indeed, romanticisation—of oral storytelling amongst the folk in the early nineteenth century and to do so they had to posit a rupture or separation not only between the presence of the folk and the absence of their own editorial interventions, but also between literate and oral culture, between modern, self-conscious writing and older, supposedly natural, spontaneous storytelling. However, Margaret Spufford has shown that, from as early as the late sixteenth century, 'illiteracy was everywhere face to face with literacy, and the oral with the printed word' (1991:32). Rudolf Schenda has suggested, thoroughly against the grain of most contemporary folklore scholarship but persuasively nonetheless, that the precedence given to orality both by the nineteenth-century collectors, and by contemporary folklorists is mistaken. He argues instead that 'it is first and foremost the spread of literacy and the act of reading that promotes storytelling in the lower social classes'

(1993:46).⁹ In other words, the direction of transmission, rather than moving from the folk to the élite, may well have travelled from writing to oral tale-telling.

Schenda's account recalls Jacques Derrida's well-known deconstruction of phonocentrism (the prioritisation of the spoken word [*phone*] over writing) in Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic system, presented in his *Course in General Linguistics* (1916). Here Saussure presents speech as authentic, spontaneous, and unmediated language, and writing as dependent on it, and thus as secondary (both chronologically and synchronically). Saussure claims, for example, that

Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first. The linguistic object is not both the written and the spoken forms of words; the spoken forms alone constitute the object.

(1959:23)

Derrida analyses Saussure's claims to show that the metaphysics of presence (logocentrism) is a determinative factor in this phonocentric theory of language and communication where the stability of language is considered to be best represented by speech. That is, speech confers being as presence in the moment of its enunciation, thus seemingly securing the presence/being of the speaker: '...phonocentrism merges with the historical determination of the meaning of being in general as *presence*...' (1976:12). Thus writing, defined as absence (the absence of a speaker), is seen as a deficit of presence, or, at the very most, as an indirect, secondary, and then only fleeting restoration of the author's presence.

Derrida argues that speech—the moment of utterance—can play this kind of ontological role because it seems to be the one instant in which signification (meaning) and form (object/signified) are concurrently present. At the moment of a spoken utterance, words appear to be transparent signifiers coextensive with an individual's thought; at the point of enunciation consciousness seems present to itself and concepts present themselves, directly and seemingly without mediation, as stable signifieds directly accessible by other individuals (Derrida 1981:20). Written words are, by contrast, physical marks (graphemes) which a reader has to decipher, providing meanings which she or he infers as congruent with the author's intended sense but which do not seem to be supplied in the words themselves. Writing thus offers either

⁹ The invention of the rapid (steam powered) printing press between 1810 and 1812 and inexpensive newsprint from about 1840 onwards certainly contributed in the nineteenth century to the easy availability of reading material. Literacy amongst the general populace improved rapidly in nineteenth-century Germany and Schenda offers an educated estimate that the potential literate audience was 'twenty-five percent of the population [around 1800], forty percent by 1830, seventy-five percent by 1879, and ninety percent by 1900' (1970:44).

only equivocal admittance to the thought of the writer or is wholly anonymous, unconnected with any speaker or author. It thus seems that writing, for Saussure, is not merely a mechanical apparatus for representing speech but more significantly a deformation or distortion of speech. Voice/speech is privileged by Saussure, Derrida claims, so that language can be treated in terms of presence. But, for Derrida, this posited presence is always already inhabited by *différance*—marked by absence (deferral) and by fluidity (difference), rather than by the fixity of meaning.¹⁰ This is because writing, which, as Saussure claims, is not the first object of linguistic enquiry, is constructed on the very same principles as speech. Derrida shows that writing returns at a crucial point in Saussure's work when he has to explain the nature of linguistic units as purely differential and therefore arbitrary in nature.¹¹ In order to make his case Saussure turns to writing as the clearest example of language as a system of differences having previously rejected its possible status as pure language, unlike speech (1959:119–120). Derrida shows that there is at work in Saussure's text, therefore, an operation of 'self-deconstruction', in which the text unmasks its own construction and reveals itself as a rhetorical operation rather than as having a solid empirical foundation. Having established a hierarchy that makes writing a derivative form of speech, Saussure's own argument shows, unintentionally, that this relationship can be reversed and that speech is a manifestation of the principles that are at work in writing. Therefore, for Derrida, Saussure demonstrates against his own argument that speech is a species of writing rather than *vice versa*. Here the logic of the supplement is displayed in the working of Saussure's own text: the marginal (writing) in its very marginality turns out to characterise the central object of discussion (speech).¹²

The Grimms' own prioritisation of orality over literature itself encodes a similar metaphysics of presence. As I have already suggested, the Grimms certainly believed that their own collection of fairy tales was a faithful facsimile of oral storytelling and was, furthermore, an important contribution to the preservation of the German past—the restoration of its presence—given that oral storytelling was on the wane. In the view

¹⁰ I take up this discussion in Chapter 8 and provide there a more detailed overview of the terms that Derrida employs.

¹¹ Saussure refers to this principle as 'the absolutely final law of language' which is 'that there is nothing that can ever reside in *one* term...*a* is powerless to designate anything without the aid of *b*, and the same thing is true of *b* without the aid of *a*....[B]oth have no value except through their reciprocal difference....[N]either has any value...other than through this same plexus of eternally negative differences' (1959:65–67).

¹² See Derrida 1976:27–73 for his discussion of Saussure's phonocentrism. I discuss more fully Derrida's concepts of the 'metaphysics of presence' and the logic of supplementarity in Chapter 8.

of the brothers, its traces could best be secured for future generations in print. Their concern with the priority of the oral over the written explains, at the very least, the Grimms' suspicion of the *Kunstmärchen* genre which privileged literariness at the expense of the unsullied voice—the retrieved presence—of the *Volk*. Oral transmission of tales, for the Grimms, represented the primal scene of folklore—the origin of the *Volk*—and, therefore, of German *cultural* unity, evoking a memory of the original community gathered together, perhaps around a campfire, reciting the tales and traditions that bound them together as a people with shared values and history. The presentation of their collection as a faithful reproduction of orally transmitted tales did of course reflect their own ambivalence regarding the relationship of 'high art' to popular culture and the unsettling interplay of the written and the oral. However, it also attempted to legitimate the idea that the preservation of orality secured contiguity with the origin of the German people: orality signalled originality, and hence a restoration of the presence of the primordial community which was, in the romantic rhetoric of authenticity, the firm foundation of Germanic identity and noble pedigree. As Zipes contends, 'it is apparent that [the Grimms] wanted to stress the relationship of each tale to an ideal *Urvolk* and *Ursprache*, while at the same time they focused on the specific German tradition with the express purpose of discovering something new about the origins of German customs and laws (1987:67).

The Grimms' strategy of underplaying their editorial role in shaping the narratives—of, in effect, insisting on their own absence from the texts—thus relied on a notion that the tales preserved intact the transparent voice of the *Volk*—their continuing and uncorrupted presence—which was wholly natural, original, and thus authentic. However, the purported presence of the folk in the *KHM* was as much an invention of the brothers' editorial efforts as was their own absence. As such, the tales produced in the Grimms' collection were what Stewart calls a 'distressed genre' (1991:103), one that was given all the appearance of age but which was, in fact, a relatively recent invention (see also Gaster 1887:339–340). Whatever the cause, the promotion of orality in the work of nineteenth-century scholars like the Grimm brothers signalled a growing nostalgia for a past that had, perhaps, never existed, but one upon which they nonetheless sought to ground the certainty of the German character and presence.¹³

¹³ Stewart has summarised the concept of nostalgia in a way that well conveys the nature of the Grimms' attitude towards the past when she suggests that 'Nostalgia is a sadness without an

Not only was the priority granted to orality possibly mistaken or illusory, the Germanic authenticity of the Grimms' sources is itself questionable. Significantly, as Elizabeth Harries contends, most of the tales that the Grimms collected or transcribed 'had their roots in earlier European *written* literature' rather than in ancient Germanic traditions (2001:77–79). One obvious source, which the Grimms did acknowledge, was Charles Perrault (1628–1703),¹⁴ a French author and poet who was influential in developing the genre of written fairytales, and whose best known tales were published in 1697. Most of these stories were themselves adapted from earlier folktale collections, in particular those published by the Italian poet Giambattista Basile (1566 or 1575–1632). Nor were the Grimms' sources entirely transmitted to them orally, or even derived originally from oral traditions: in the first edition, as Luke notes, they 'occasionally used literary sources, if they judged them...to have something of a folktale character' and further, that 'such sources were not even always German: a medieval Latin poem...was the basis of one of the tales in the 1812 volume' (Luke 1982:29). Jeannine Blackwell (1987:163) shows that the Grimms obtained many of their stories from over twenty literary sources, in addition to those already noted.

Moreover, even many of their main informants were not quite as German as the Grimms wanted to suggest. Viehmann, for example, was of French Huguenot descent and, as Warner suggests, 'her culture was much more mixed and rather less rootedly Hessian than the Grimm brothers wanted to suggest' (1994:192). In addition, the connections and kinship of other Grimm informants were more permeated with literary French influence than it would seem from the Grimms' presentation of their collection as determinedly indigenous, an aspect which Warner claims has been neglected by folklorists 'in favour of the mythical dream of autochthonous purity' (*ibid.*). Nor were

object, a sadness which creates a longing that of necessity is inauthentic because it does not take part in lived experience....Nostalgia, like any form of narrative, is always ideological: the past it seeks has never existed except as a narrative, and hence, always absent, that past continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack' (1993:23).

¹⁴ In the preface to the 1812 edition of the *KHM* the Grimms acknowledged Perrault's work as an important precursor to their own: 'France has certainly yet more tales currently than those which Charles Perrault gave us, who alone still treated them as children's tales (not so his inferior imitators, Aulnoi, Murat)' (in Harries 2001:22). Harries draws attention to the Grimms' disparagement in parentheses of Marie-Catherine le Jumel de Barville, baronne d'Aulnoy (1650/1651–1705) and Henriette-Julie de Castelnau, comtesse de Murat (1670–1716), showing that they, rather than Perrault, were probably amongst the first to write down fairy tales in France towards the end of the seventeenth century, and explains the Grimms' dismissal of their work as 'imitators' of Perrault in light of the fact that these women were from the aristocratic classes and therefore their contributions did not chime well with the Grimms' interest in retrieving a 'supposedly simpler "folk culture"' (2001:23–24).

the Grimms sources entirely derived from the *Volk*. As Warner again suggests, ‘Though the stories are unquestionably traditional, they are not quite as homespun—or as rustically lowborn—as the brothers claimed’ (*ibid.*), largely in view of the fact that many of the tales were gathered from immediate family members and friends such as Droste-Hülshoff who were very familiar with French fairytale traditions and who were by no means from the lower classes.

Another aspect that calls into question the extent to which the Grimms were faithful to their stated intentions regarding the fidelity of their sources and unadulterated transmission is the nature of the editing that they undertook. Even in the first edition, some of the stories were amalgamations of variant versions of the tales, and in successive editions an increasing number of tales were selective combinations of variants from quite different parts of Germany. As Luke suggests, ‘Comparison of the Oelenberg manuscript with the first edition confirms that from the outset the material was being not only selected but tied and smoothed out, clarified and harmonised’ (Luke 1982:29). Luke places the responsibility for these editorial decisions with Wilhelm Grimm, arguing that his intentions differed from those of his brother in that he was more concerned to convey a “‘pure” *Volkstümlichkeit* [‘popular provenance’], and “ideal” folktale tone’ than to ‘a scrupulously exact historical record of raw folk-utterance’ (1982:29–30).¹⁵ To this end Wilhelm, who was the primary editor of the collection after 1815, sought to reproduce, or at least to accentuate and intensify, the unsophisticated manner of oral narrative by using simple sentences and a commonplace lexicon, interspersed with popular sayings and idioms, occasional asides to the imagined audience of listening children, and rhyming formulae for ends of stories. Despite the Grimms’ concern to emphasise the *Völkisch* tone of their tales, very few were presented in local dialects but instead in High German. Moreover, as Luke shows, attempts were made in successive editions to purify the language of foreign influences (1982:30).

In addition to the developments and changes discussed thus far, the most significant editorial changes operated, however, at the level of narrative itself. Tully attributes these alterations to the fact that the Grimms intended their collection to be an *Erziehungsbuch* (an educational guide), an ambition that is stated in their foreword to the second edition (1987:137). At the very least, the changes made provide evidence for the Grimms’ concerns to promote specific bourgeois values based on the moral codes of an

¹⁵ Zipes disagrees with Luke on this point, arguing instead that the comparison—such as that carried out by Gunhild Ginschel (1967)—of the texts that Jakob Grimm collated for the first edition with Wilhelm’s, confirms that ‘their work shares the exact same tendencies’ (1987:68).

idealised bygone era, to recreate a 'national aesthetic' (Rebel 1988:2), and, as Tully argues, to produce 'a voice of patriarchal authority for the German nation' (1997:151): explicitly sexual elements were removed; violent scenes were heightened; supernatural events were explained in terms of characters' moral transgressions or conformity; the narratorial voice was increasingly audible, functioning to explain the thoughts of characters and to reinforce moral judgements; the indirect speech of the manuscript and first edition was frequently changed to direct speech in the second edition further enhancing the sense of accessibility to characters' motivations and thought; and characterisation was narrowed into an unambiguous division between good and evil actors.

V. Gender, Class, and Nation: The Kinder- und Hausmärchen as an Erziehungsbuch

Several scholars have argued that a gendered dialectic directs these editorial interventions and functions to strengthen the bourgeois value system that the Grimms wanted to place at the heart of their national aesthetic. Moreover, in my view, it is one that offers an insight into the patrilineal assumptions that guided the construction of German national identity as it was pursued by the romantics, working to structure the vocabulary of nationalism based on the assumption that the patriarchal family was the basic unit of the social order.¹⁶ There is thus an accumulating body of feminist literature on the patriarchal dimensions of the Grimms' tales and on the social function of

¹⁶ The bourgeois basis of romantic nationalism was very clearly anti-individualist, collective, hierarchical, and inegalitarian in its evocation of the past and in its vision of the ideal national community. As such it lent itself well to the theorisation of the patriarchal family as the basic social unit upon which all other forms of civil life could be modelled. This view was helpfully discussed by Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936), the founder of German sociology, who, writing towards the end of the nineteenth century, distinguished between two types of social grouping: *Gemeinschaft* (usually translated as 'community') which refers to groupings based on a feeling of togetherness, and *Gesellschaft* (society) which, on the other hand, refers to groups that are sustained by an instrumental goal. According to Tönnies, the *Gemeinschaft* (community) was opposed to the *Gesellschaft* which was based on the liberal principles that emerged out of the French Revolution and the notion of nations established on the basis of the social contract. Tönnies notion of the *Gemeinschaft* captures the type of social order the romantics were advocating when he suggests that 'Family life is the general basis of life in the *Gemeinschaft*. It subsists in village and town life. The village community and the town themselves can be considered as large families, the various clans and houses representing the elementary organisms of its body; guilds, corporations, and offices, the tissues and organs of the town. Here original kinship and inherited status remain an essential, or at least the most important, condition of participating fully in common property and other rights'. He further suggested that the idea of civil authority is, 'within the *Gemeinschaft*, most adequately represented by fatherhood, or paternity' (1957:39). Thus, in this system, the political or social order rested upon the procreative order, and individuals' submission to nature's unadulterated laws was seen to be necessary and moral.

fairytales more generally.¹⁷ Many of the analyses are concerned with the way in which the tales, through the course of several editions, increasingly came to promote restrictive archetypes of femininity, such as passivity, voicelessness, and self-abnegation, thus conforming to conservative and heterosexual models of gender, or to inscribe misogynist portrayals of females—in particular, maternal violence, cruelty, and wickedness—often creating an equivalence between vindictive mothers (or, in later editions, step-mothers) and the malevolent figure of the witch. Ruth Bottigheimer has analysed why the fairytales were such a suitable format for what were in effect didactic manoeuvres along gendered lines, showing how gender-coded themes and motifs in the collection frequently expressed a normative (and normalising) view of women, rendering them mute, confined, and, in some cases—Snow White and Sleeping Beauty—literally comatose:

One must concede that fairy tales offered an apparently innocent and peculiarly suitable medium for both transmitting and enforcing the norm of the silent woman. To the extent that these tales corroborated and codified the values of the society in which they appear, they reinforced them powerfully, symbolising and codifying the status quo and serving as paradigms for powerlessness.

(1986a:130)

The Grimms' tales were thus tools for the dissemination of appropriate, normative gendered behaviour where femininity was aligned with silence, powerlessness, and the private sphere, and, in line with the brother's intention that the *KHM* should serve as an educational manual for children, served to reinforce these norms in the domestic setting.

What one learns about women from the Grimms tales, therefore, is that silence, like patience, is a particularly female virtue. The figure of the silent or silenced woman in many of the Grimms tales often served as a sign of their piety and submissiveness to the paternal family. For example, in the tale of 'The Twelve Brothers' the sister of the brothers takes a vow of silence for seven years almost at the cost of her own life in order to reverse a spell that has turned them into ravens (see Luke 1982:111–115, 119–123). Enforced silence is used as a punishment for women (Blackwell 1987:164). Those female characters who do speak directly are usually witches or wicked step-mothers. Bottigheimer (1986b:115–131) shows that the words of 'good' female characters are more frequently expressed in indirect speech while men and 'evil' female characters use direct speech. In fact, witches and males speak more frequently than any of the other characters that populate the Grimms' tales.

¹⁷ See Lieberman 1972; Franz 1972; Stone 1975; Kolbenschlag 1979; Dowling 1981; Johnson Phelps 1981; Bottigheimer 1986b, 1987; 1988; Tatar 1987; Warner 1994; Harries 2001.

Women's silence is depicted in many different ways, but all point to appropriate femininity as passive, compliant, supine, and dependent on men for the restoration of their voice once their virtue has been proved. As Maureen Thum suggests, in a large number of tales contributed by Marie Hassenpflug, 'a passive, obedient heroine is portrayed as undergoing a process of maturation or socialization during which she waits for deliverance by a prince, a king, or other male authority figure' (1993:13). In 'Dornröschen' (Sleeping Beauty) and 'Schneewittchen' (Snow White) female protagonists quite literally sleep their way into womanhood and it would thus seem, as Thum also argues, that 'the paradoxical message of the tales is that passivity is a source of power, a means to achieve emotional and economic rewards' (*ibid.*). The portrayal of heroines in this way raises interesting questions regarding the intended audience and the female contributors to the tales. As I have noted, the Grimms derived many of their tales from women and one could therefore ask, as Warner does, 'if and when women are narrating, why are the female characters so cruel and the mother so often dead at the start of the story? Why have women continued to speak at all within this body of story which defames them so profoundly? Could they be speaking to a purpose?' (1995:209–210). She concludes that

...attributing to women testimony about women's wrongs and wrongdoing gives them added value: ...if women say such things about themselves, then the matter is settled. What some women say against others can be usefully turned against all of them.

(1995:209)

Blackwell has helpfully reflected on the implications of what I would call the Grimms' female ventriloquism and explores what it means when women tell their children stories of enforced female silence. She proposes that

reading fairy tales aloud in the nineteenth-century household served to reinforce the public propagandistic model of the respectable German household: the forthright males explaining and ordering, the "good" women quiet and pliable, concerned only about the activities of men. Moreover, it is the female child-carer in the home who passes on the message of women's deprivation of power; she would seem to give her consent to the project of keeping women silent.

(1987:164–165)

I would argue then, in agreement with Blackwell, that the Grimms were intent on defining the character of women in conformity with their bourgeois ideals, but I would further suggest that this characterisation was a crucial element in their construction of the ideal German nation, indicating, as I will discuss below, that authentic Germanness was equivalent to strong and determined manliness. Gender, class, and nation were thus intertwined narratives: the Grimms naturalised inequitable gender and class

arrangements at the same time as they constructed German national identity through their attempts to restore/invent the voice of the *Volk*.

Tully (1987:149–169) provides a very clear and helpful comparative analysis of four of the tales that reinforces the parallelism between the national idealisation and the gendered/class dialectic that runs throughout the development of the tales. She compares versions from the Ölenberg manuscript, the 1812–1815, and the 1819–1822 editions and demonstrates persuasively that the final product of the editorial process was the ‘consequence of a conscious selection process...which...was intended to advocate a specific value system’ (1987:152). It was one which conformed to the Grimms’ belief that the tales were a didactic guide to an ancient and exemplary German culture based on traditional (that is, patriarchal) morality, justice and values such as loyalty, familial love, and honour, and which would consequently promote the stability and unity within German society that was a prerequisite to the romantics’ German national vision. Moreover, as Tully later suggests, the value system conveyed by the tales was intended to ‘promote a hierarchical social structure with a clear mediatory role for the bourgeoisie’ because the ‘*Volk*...content of the texts serves an exemplary function as bourgeois values are projected on to an idealisation of life amongst the popular classes’ (1987:195).

In addition, this value system, clearly encoded in the romantic worldview and indebted to Herder, made stark distinctions along gendered lines that mirrored these class divisions, where women’s roles in society were defined solely in terms of their domestic roles in the family, reflecting Novalis’ view that ‘Women know nothing of social conditions—altogether they are only connected to the State, Church, and the public, etc. by means of their husbands. They live in a literally natural state’ (Hardenberg [Novalis] 1968, III:568, Fragment 92). Here the ‘natural state’ of women parallels the romantic view that the *Volk* were closer to nature than their modern descendants, although significantly such a view does not accord women the same degree of valorisation or admiration. This is partly because women are seen frequently to present a threat to order and stability when they do not conform to the domestic, patriarchal stereotype of demure and obedient wife, mother, or daughter. This is a view vividly emphasised in several of the Grimms’ tales, in particular in ‘Hansel and Gretel’ where the mother is presented as malevolent and uncaring, selfishly putting her own well-being over that of her family, neglecting her maternal duties, and persuading her meek but loving husband to abandon their children in the forest. Here the mother

personifies an aggressive overturning of the natural order (*Naturordnung*) and the outcome is potentially calamitous for all concerned. The other female character in the tale—the witch in whose ‘gingerbread’ cottage the children are imprisoned—is similarly evil. Redemption of the family within the tale is only secured through the filial loyalty and cooperation of the young brother and sister and, when the children are reunited with their father at the end of the tale, the mother and the witch are dead, signalling the restoration of the natural order.

Tully shows that the misogynist tone of the tale is progressively more marked as it develops over several editions, predominantly through the depiction of the mother, and then step-mother, as increasingly cruel. For Tully, this is achieved in several subtle ways, including ‘the addition of an aggressive tone through direct speech, using such interjections as “ei Narr” [‘oh fool’]’ and providing ‘insights into [the mother’s] thoughts supplied by the narrator’ which ‘heightens the reader’s view of her evil nature’ (1987:155). Bottigheimer also shows that the Grimms’ tales were increasingly permeated with a ‘general pattern of exculpating men and incriminating women’ (1987:81). Mothers in the tales are regularly portrayed in wholly negative terms although admittedly fathers too are not always viewed entirely positively, usually when they fail to assert paternal authority or are too easily swayed by the cunning of their wives or daughters. The difference in the portrayal, however, is that female wrongdoers are much more likely to suffer punishment than their male counterparts (Bottigheimer 1987:81–94).

The presentation of familial roles in this way reinforces a bourgeois ethic which foregrounds the importance of family loyalty and cohesion, paternal authority, and a clear-cut gendered division of labour. Zipes suggests that the failure of individuals to act in conformity with these family values is often the catalyst for the tale’s narrative action and that this again encodes a bourgeois view of the family structure which, I might add, is also clearly patriarchal:

The portrayal of the family in the Grimms’ tales reflects the dissolution of the original family at first, whereby the protagonist or protagonists must go on a quest to establish a new realm. The loss of family must be compensated by the recreation of a new type of family that incorporates a sense of the Grimms’ own bourgeois ethics.

(1988:39)

Strikingly, then, the events in the tales parallel the intention of the Grimms’ editorial choices and confirm the didactic value of the *Märchen* in that the brothers were on their own quest to restore or to create a new familial model of the German nation which drew

inspiration from the stable, hierarchical, and wholesome past. The German nation is thus unambiguously aligned with the bourgeois familial setting while at the same time the contours of German nationalism are defined in terms of a clear gendered division of labour and characterisation. The implicit message is that manliness and Germanness are analogous.

The alliance of gender with class in this regard suggests to me that the construction and idealisation of German national identity was considered by the Grimms to be founded on a patriarchal archetype—of the father as guardian of tradition and guarantor of social cohesion and stability—derived from Herder: just as (fore)fathers shape posterity in their position as the source and conduit of tradition, the concept of the fatherland has a seminal and ongoing role in the development of a nation. The portrayal of the family in the Grimms' tales is thus intended as paradigmatic both for bourgeois measures of respectability and for nation building. Roles are created in accordance with specific gendered guidelines and the suggestion is that compliance with these roles is the key to familial harmony and by implication, national unity and stability. Fathers should be strong and authoritative, mothers submissive and caring, and children obedient and loyal. Non-compliance leads to punishment and the destruction of the family unit. The bourgeois family is thus construed as a microcosm of the German nation where reciprocal care and patriarchal authority are the ideals. The Grimms' reworking of the tales emphasised these factors and laid the foundation both for the value system which their *Erziehungsbuch* sought to promote and for the fatherland that they envisaged.

As a whole, within the broader context of romantic nationalism, the *KHM* was largely a successful project as far as raising national consciousness was concerned, as Aris remarks:

The Romantics started as literary revolutionaries, shocking the people...and cultivating the past as a protest against the present. A few decades later, fairy tales, folk songs, stories of knights and witches, had become the common property of the people and had greatly strengthened the national consciousness, so that Germans became interested for the first time in the treasures of their literature and poetry.
(1965:219)

Furthermore, the *KHM* provided Jakob Grimm with the material basis upon which to reconstruct Germanic myth, developed in his four-volume work *Deutsche Mythologie*, which Feldman and Richardson claim was 'responsible for the development by which mythologic study has become the study mainly of folklore' (1972:410). The *Deutsche Mythologie* was certainly a central influence in the development of comparative

mythology throughout the nineteenth century leading Feldman and Richardson to equate it with James Frazer's achievements in *The Golden Bough* (*ibid.*). In the *Deutsche Mythologie*, Grimm consolidated his view that the origins of the German nation were to be found in its ancient lore and legends and that, further, these could rival the pedigree of the ancient classical Greek and Roman myths. In the following chapter I will examine the content of the *Deutsche Mythologie* and Grimm's achievement in ostensibly retrieving a remarkably thorough and rounded picture of German myth.

CHAPTER SIX

GERMAN IDENTITY: MYTH, MASCULINITY, AND LANDSCAPE

This chapter examines the culmination of the romantic retrieval of myth and folklore in the form of Jakob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* (henceforth *DM*). The *DM* was the most systematic and comprehensive contribution to the creation of a national mythology in nineteenth-century Germany, inaugurating what was, according to Grimm, a new science of mythology. Grimm believed that the meticulous analysis of textual sources following rigorous philological principles, supplemented by the study of folk narratives and practices, would peel back the layers of the past revealing the pure source of German myth traditions and therefore the character of the German *Urvolk*. The *DM* was also a manifesto of sorts for the Heidelberg romantics in that it set out an anti-Catholic position—deliberately against the Jena romantic school led by the Schlegel brothers—regarding the chronology of the German nation and the kind of past that would best serve the retrieval of vernacular traditions and character. The Heidelberg romantics' resistance to the Catholic Church, which they viewed as an imperial interloper in the German territories, thus informed the project of the *DM* and wider debates concerning the proper origin, form, and content of a national mythology, and was thus part of a confessional divide between the Jena and Heidelberg romantics that I survey in the first section of this chapter. Grimm used a variety of sources to sketch out the contours of German mythology, none of which were more important than Tacitus' *Germania* and the Scandinavian *Prose Edda*. Drawing on these sources, Grimm claimed that the incursion of Christianity in the Middle Ages had been a foreign import and had repressed the pagan religion of the indigenous populations of northern Europe. However, remnants of their practices and beliefs had survived in a heavily disguised form and could be rediscovered by attending to contemporary folklore, peasant practices, and some of the liturgical festivals of the Catholic church. The Protestant Reformation, for Grimm, signified the triumph of the indigenous German spirit over the imposition of Catholicism. The moral of the tale that Grimm told in the *DM*, as he sought to decipher the remnants of ancient German paganism, was that where Germany had once been true to its indigenous spirit, it would be so again when the German people were recalled to their noble pre-Christian past and traditions that he believed his sources represented. As

in the *KHM*, Grimm presented his national mythology in patrilineal terms, that is, as rooted in the cult of the father god Odin who had, according to the Norse sources he consulted, created the world. Following the publication of the *DM*, Grimm's theories became widely popular and in the second section of the chapter I discuss the outcome of his work. The effort to construct a national mythology moved out from the rarefied atmosphere of academic institutions into the public arena through art, monument building, and national festivals of remembrance where the figures of Arminius, Germania, and Odin were celebrated as representatives of the spirit of the German people. In this process the landscape was simultaneously 'territorialised' and sacralised through the nostalgic depiction of the German past as a golden age that would be reborn through collective acts of memorialisation. More importantly, this territorialisation was represented in almost entirely masculine and patrilineal terms.

I. Grimm's Deutsche Mythologie and the German Vorzeit

The valorisation of antiquity, as I have already noted, was a crucial element in the romantic nationalist project and Grimm's interest in the ancient past of the Germans was no exception. As Anthony Smith comments, in terms that well explain the utility of antiquity for nationalists like Grimm,

Antiquity is...deemed to be canonical, because it stands at the inception of national time. This is a time when nations are most 'authentically' themselves, unmixed with later accretions and foreign borrowings; and when nations are most heroic, for antiquity itself can enhance the sense of national dignity and inspire emulation.

(2001a:445)

In contrast to the heavy-handed editing of the *KHM*, the *DM* was less a smooth and crafted rendering of tales designed to appeal to a popular audience than a densely annotated work of scholarship, with evidence of its learning provided in lengthy footnotes and numerous references to variant readings and sources on every page, all of it intended to establish the canonical nature of the German past. After the publication of the *DM*, for most scholars and writers of the time, the path to a national mythology led through the forgotten texts and scattered remnants of the German past preserved in folk customs and sayings, to the *Vorzeit* (literally 'pre-time'),¹ indicating once more the nostalgic quality of German romanticism. As Williamson puts it,

¹ In general the term *Vorzeit* referred to period lasting from antiquity through the Reformation. However, the ambivalent meaning of the term suggested a period external to the process of historical change and thus it lent itself well to the more imaginative or speculative elements of romantic mythology and to the view that the recovery of the origins of the German people in the *Vorzeit* would reveal an autochthonous purity, untouched by the ravages of time.

In the minds of most commentators, the *Vorzeit* seemed simpler, more pious, and more organically unified than the fragmented and disjointed contemporary world. For some, it was the inspiration for a future German community based on the principle of cultural nationality. For others, however, the demands for a revolutionary transformation of the present gave way to a scholarly imperative that wedded reverence for the past with a rigorous attention to sources.

(2004:74)

Although Williamson makes a distinction between the projected future of German cultural nationalism and emergent philological scholarship concerned with the past in the face of contemporary political upheavals, in my view these two forms of romantic mythology were intertwined: they both looked to the ancient past as the basis for the realisation of German unification and so past, present, and future merged together, reflecting Levinger's and Lytle's triadic structure of nationalist rhetoric outlined in the Chapter 4.

The methodological principles and assumptions that underpinned the intended form and content of this national mythology did, however, reveal some significant differences amongst those romantic scholars who advocated its reconstruction, particularly concerning its origins, nature and cultural implications. At the heart of the dispute was a confessional divide, touched on in the previous chapter, with scholars split into two main camps—those who subscribed to the Jena romantic circle's literary-aesthetic perspective, exemplified in the work of August Schlegel, and those Heidelberg romantics, particularly Jakob Grimm, who were collecting folklore and developing philological methods for the study of ancient literature towards nationalistic ends. As Williamson remarks, 'the nexus of concern [was] the transition from paganism to Catholicism, which was viewed alternatively as a spiritual triumph or as a moment of tragic loss' (2004:74). In the first two decades of the nineteenth century the focus of the debate regarding the nationalist utility of myth centred on questions regarding the type of myth—whether pagan or Christian—that best exemplified the original German character. Both groups regardless of their differences, however, predicted that contemporary efforts to recover myth would be a decisive moment in renewing the self-image of the German *Volk*, particularly against a political backdrop where German culture and identity was both threatened from outside and divided within.

The view that favoured a Catholic revival was represented by August Schlegel who saw the Middle Ages as an era of material and spiritual pre-eminence for the German races, united under the Holy Roman Empire:

The knightly spirit emerged from the combination of the robust and honest bravery of the German North with a completely spiritual religion coming from the Orient—

Christianity, an occurrence that was not just brilliant but truly enchanting, and hitherto without parallel in human history.

(1812:434; trans. Williamson 2004:77)

Schlegel was thus keen to emphasise the specifically Christian quality of medieval epics and legends, suggesting that Christian orders such as the Knights Templar, and a manly chivalric spirit fused with chaste monasticism, gave rise to a Christian mythology (*Rittermythologie*)—*ritterliche und christliche Mythologie*—that centred on courageous saints, bold quests, and crusading wars of religion (see Williamson 2004:77–78 and Feldman and Richardson 1972:341–348). For Schlegel these qualities were embodied in the *Nibelungenlieder* epic (henceforth *NL*). The exploits of Siegfried, the hero of the *NL*, were already known from the *Völksbucher* (chapbooks; literally ‘people’s books’) but it was not until the discovery of a full manuscript version of the *NL* in 1755, published two years later by Johann Jakob Bodmer (1698–1783), that Siegfried began to figure in scholarly discussions. In the first decade of the nineteenth century the study of the *NL* reached a pinnacle as both a scholarly and a nationalist enterprise. Schlegel offered a series of lectures on the *NL* in 1803 (‘Mythologie des Mittelalters’ in A. Schlegel 1965) where he dated its composition to the fifth century, considering at least the second half of the text to be an accurate portrayal of actual historical events and claiming its poetic quality to be superior to the *Iliad* (Williamson 2004:86). Somewhat predictably, he argued that although some elements of the text were clearly derived from German paganism, as a whole its character was Christian, conveying the spirit of medieval chivalric culture, particularly with its concerns for justice, retribution, and manly honour. In particular, he viewed the *NL* as an exemplary template for dramatic adaptations of the tales contained within it, suggesting that

If our national mythology is ever successfully renewed, a number of narrower, more limited dramatic works could be developed out of this epic tragedy. After we have roamed all corners of the earth, we should finally begin to use our indigenous poetry.

(1965:114)

He advocated, therefore that the *NL*, along with the *Heldenbuch*, a thirteenth-century collection of poems² should be elevated to the status of national epics and be taught in schools as canonical texts, on the model of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (Williamson 2004:86).

² The poems were mainly collated from romances and two contemporary sagas, the Ostrogothic saga of Ermanrich, Dietrich, and Etzel (Attila), and the saga of Hugdietrich, Wolddietrich and Ortnit, probably of Franconian origin.

A number of writers and dramatists heeded Schlegel's call. The German philologist Friedrich von der Hagen (1780–1856) published a popular reworking of the epic in 1807 and by 1810 five different editions of the *NL* had been published. Public readings of the poem were held regularly in the salons of Berlin and the geographer August Zeune (1778–1853) in a series of public lectures on the *NL* in 1809 suggested that it should become the basis of national education, reducing cultural dependence on the French and possibly laying the foundation for political education of the general public. Schlegel too had high hopes for the revival of the epic as a inspirational guide for German unity, suggesting that the renewed interest in the *NL* that these efforts represented, indicated a 'return to the womb of the *Vorzeit*, the great means for a rebirth of an original language that has never been separated from its roots' (in Williamson 2004:86). The best known, and perhaps most warmly received reworking of the *NL* was Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's *Sigurd der Schlangentöter, ein Heldenspiel* (Sigurd [Siegfried] the Dragon Slayer: A Hero's Tale'; 1808) whose composition had been undertaken on the advice of Schlegel who had stressed to Fouqué the need for an 'alert, immediate, energetic, and especially a patriotic poetry' (in Williamson 2004:87). Fouqué's *Sigurd* influenced subsequent versions of the *NL*, most notably Christian Friedrich Hebbel's trilogy *Die Nibelungen* (1862) and Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1854–1874).

The renewed interest in the *NL*, and Schlegel's claim regarding its parity with Greek epic eventually ended in an authorship dispute with scholars divided over whether it was the product of a single individual on the model of Homer, or the work of a group. Schlegel held the former view, suggesting that while the *NL* had probably originated as a series of unconnected tales and poems, a single individual had assembled the fragments together and crafted them into the finished version. In an article in 1812 he proposed Heinrich von Ofterdingen, a quasi-fictional *Minnesinger* (minstrel), whose participation in the *Sängerkrieg* (Minstrels' contest) at Wartburg was told in the thirteenth-century poem 'Der Wartburgkrieg',³ as the 'final author' of the *NL*. The Grimm brothers, in contrast, held the latter view, and so, as Williamson remarks, 'By identifying a single individual with the *Nibelungenlied*, Schlegel wandered into the crosshairs of the Grimm brothers' (2004:89). The substance of the dispute concerned their distinct attitudes towards the origins and form of national mythology, particularly

³ Novalis also told the story of Heinrich von Ofterdingen in his unfinished novel of the same name (1802).

regarding the relative weight that should be placed on individual genius versus the instinctive expression of the *Volk*. Jakob Grimm objected to Schlegel's account of the authorship of the *NL* on three main grounds. Firstly, he believed that myth and epic poetry originated in the unconscious of the *Volk* and, thus, to attribute authorship to a single individual was mistaken. He claimed, for example, that the creation of the *NL* had originated as a form of *Naturpoesie*⁴ before being developed over many generations into its medieval epic form:

as we possess it, the *Nibelungen* is nothing other than the living reworking of the poem as it emerged inwardly and necessarily from popular poetry. There is no decisive external or internal reason to ascribe it to Heinrich von Ofterdingen.

(in Williamson 2004:89)

Secondly, he rejected Schlegel's insistence on the Germanic value of *Rittermythologie* and his notion that the *NL* was exemplary in this regard. Grimm, as I will discuss below, viewed German myth as a survival from the pagan past, and thought that many aspects attributed by Schlegel to the Christianity of the Middle Ages were in fact far older and therefore more purely German than Schlegel was able to see. Finally, Grimm objected to Schlegel's call for dramatic reworkings of material like the *NL*: 'I don't understand how one can demand from modern poets...that they work in the direction of nationality, when a certain national essence always and unavoidably appears on its own' (in Williamson 2004:88). Thus, Grimm's nationalist project was resolutely committed to the revival of purely indigenous culture and customs. For Schlegel, in contrast, the revival of medieval Christian mythology represented by the *NL* formed part of a program of what he considered 'European patriotism', which would ameliorate the destructive legacy of the French revolutionary wars and eventually unite the entire continent under the medieval form of Christianity he cherished. The *NL* would then take its proper place amongst the other great literary works of Christian Europe (Williamson 2004:90).⁵

⁴ The term '*Naturpoesie*' was coined by Herder and referred to poetry that was natural and spontaneous, such as folk ballads. As with the distinction between *Volksmärchen* and *Kunstmärchen*, it was generally contrasted to *Kunstpoesie*, poetic literature produced by conscious creation in conformity with literary aesthetics.

⁵ The dispute over the authorship of the *NL* was eventually resolved by the philologist Karl Lachmann (1793–1851), who presented his findings in his '*Habilitationsschrift*' *über die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Gedichts von der Nibelungen Noth* ('Habilitation Treatise on the Original Form of the Poems of the Nibelungen'; 1816) and who supported Grimm's view against that of Schlegel. He used form criticism—developed in Germany as a method of biblical criticism applied as a means of analysing the typical features of texts, especially their conventional forms or structures—in order to relate them to their sociological contexts, to propose the *NL* was composed of a series of twenty separate lays compiled by medieval redactors to produce the late twelfth-century version of the poem. Here he followed the work of Friedrich August Wolf who had demonstrated, citing evidence from Greek art, mythology, and architecture, that the Greek epics could not have been

Grimm saw those medieval sources which Schlegel lauded as *Rittermythologie*, as much older than the synthetic influence of (Catholic) Christianity. Indeed, the *DM* seems to be a veiled response to August Schlegel, particularly his accusation that the Grimm brothers' interest in native folklore betrayed a 'devotion to triviality' (Feldman and Richardson 1972:409; see also K. Koerner 1990). In the *DM* Jakob Grimm sought to demonstrate that his attention to apparently inconsequential data—folk culture—would, *contra* Schlegel, lead to a firm and rigorously accurate reconstruction of ancient German myth and show Schlegel's devotion to medievalism to be foolishly premature. Grimm later defended the collection of folklore and its importance for the interpretation of old literature in his autobiography in explicitly patriotic terms (see Denecke 1985:33).

The *DM* is clearly indebted to Herder's theories of the origins, development, and preservation of the original *Volk* in myth, but it departed from his more cosmopolitan consideration of folklore and myth in terms of a common fund of human experience in favour of a narrower and more immediately nationalistic preoccupation with isolating and distilling residual German mythic elements.⁶ The *DM* also displays the influence of Joseph Görres and Friedrich Creuzer (1771–1858) who were loosely affiliated with the Heidelberg circle of romantics of which the Grimms were a part. Both scholars, whose work I will discuss in the following chapter, believed, on the basis of Jones' discoveries, that India was the cradle of humankind and the source of all myth, which, as it was dispersed westward after early migrations, had become increasingly degraded and had lost its original purity. The remnant of this early golden age was, however, preserved in the diverse mythological traditions of the world and could thus be retrieved through close textual analysis of extant sources, especially the Indian Vedas and Upaniṣads (as they were believed to be closest to the original source). Creuzer, in particular, surmised that behind the mythological diversity of existing traditions and narratives lay a single, symbolically construed world of human experience which had subsequently developed into an organically conceived natural religion, a theory he

composed by a single author, but had been assembled from a series of oral poems by redactors in the sixth century BCE and then further revised and embellished over the following centuries. His main conclusion was that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were the work of an entire culture. Wolf's work became the model of classical philology amongst German scholars in the nineteenth century. See Williamson 2004:84–92.

⁶ Grimm's attitude towards Catholicism resembles that of Herder. Herder saw the arrival of Catholicism in Germany as having done irreparable harm to the indigenous pagan religion. Like Grimm, he commended Luther for reasserting something of the ancient German spirit in religion against the 'religion of the monks' which had used Latin to impose foreign customs and beliefs on the German people and which had 'helped to keep the vernacular languages of the European nations, and with them the people themselves, in barbarism' (in Hayes 1927:732–733).

developed most systematically in his *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* ('Symbolism and Mythology of the Ancient Peoples'; 1810–1812). His major contribution to the field of romantic mythology was his claim that the surviving myth traditions of the world concealed an original, unifying spirit behind the multiplicity of mythical narratives and that the transformation of this unity into diversity represented a deterioration of the original human spirit.

In *Symbolik und Mythologie* Creuzer argued that an arcane symbolic system (*Symbolik*) had served as the original foundation of religious expression throughout the ancient world and that it had originated with the Brahmanic caste in ancient India who had formulated an esoteric cosmology based on astronomical observation and expressed by means of symbols. Because of the occult nature of these symbols the Brahman priests had to translate them into cosmological narratives in order for them to appeal to and be understood by the common people, and for Creuzer this translation of symbols into narratives was the origin of the first myths. According to him, the ancient Indians had subsequently disseminated their wisdom far beyond India, travelling to Asia Minor, Egypt, and Israel, where they came into contact with primitive pastoralists whose religion was a form of crude fetishism. The priests not only passed on their religious system to these people but also taught them the rudiments of agriculture and statecraft, the implication being that civilisation was endowed upon the rest of the world by the ancient Indians. From Egypt the priests crossed the Mediterranean, colonising the Samothracians, who in turn exercised a profound influence on the early religion of the Greeks. Following Herodotus, Creuzer claimed that the essence of Greek religion lay in the Eleusinian mysteries that were a legacy of early contact with the Samothracians, rather than in the popular tales recited by Homer and Hesiod as was conventionally believed by scholars of the ancient world in the nineteenth century. Creuzer also believed that the transformation of the *Symbolik* into narrative resulted in the production of a prototype of the essential aspects of Christianity, including the belief that God had become human, suffered death, and risen to new life (Williamson 2004:121–150; see also Blok 1994; Feldman and Richardson 1972:387–396).

Like Görres and Creuzer, Grimm saw myth as a survival of an original primordial unity and of the original divine revelation upon which it was founded. He traced the origins of mythology to the period of the great migrations from a central homeland, when the peoples and languages of the earth were believed to have spread from the East, and he agreed with Creuzer that myth was the residue of this lost but

once universal original revelation. Grimm differed from Creuzer in one important detail, however. While he accepted the Asiatic origin of Germanic mythology, he saw it as proceeding not from a group of priests but out of the instinctive spirit of the German *Volk* in its first encounter with the climate and geography of central Europe. In his view, Germanic myth was thus intimately bound up with the language, customs, and unique history of the Germanic peoples. Grimm viewed his task in the *DM*, therefore, as he indicated in his preface to the second edition, to reconstruct this early world of German religion and myth from a variety of existing sources including the creation narratives of the *Prose Edda*, Tacitus' *Germania*, *Das Nibelungenlied*, a number of other manuscript sources, and the peasant lore that the two brothers had gathered as part of the compilation of the *KHM* (1966, III:ix). He believed strongly that the combined study of folklore, as it persisted in fragmentary form in the sayings and the customs of the common people, most notably in the fairytales collected in the *KHM*, and what he referred to as legends—namely works such as the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Edda*—would provide the missing link in a chain of historic continuity that would reconnect the German *Vorzeit* to the present. Moreover, it would enable him and scholars who followed to distinguish between the authentically vernacular elements of these sources and those which were foreign and this belief was itself a discourse of differentiation.

For Grimm, the best method for sifting out what was and was not natively German from these diverse sources was comparative. He not only attempted to retrieve the specifically Germanic elements in his sources but also attempted to purge German mythology of the influence of Christianity, showing how many apparently Christian traditions—particularly holidays, the adoration of saints, and liturgies—were in fact survivals of Germany's pagan past. In so doing, Grimm implicitly rejected August Schlegel's notion of a medieval *Rittermythologie* ('chivalric myth'), arguing instead that what was imaginative and spirited in the German medieval tradition stemmed from a repressed and then subtly integrated pre-Christian paganism rather than from Christian chivalric customs and lore (Williamson 2004:82). Grimm's driving ambition in the *DM*, which he sustains through three volumes, thirty-eight lengthy chapters, and numerous supplementary appendices, was thus to demonstrate the survival—against the odds—of the autochthonous elements of the German history and myths:

My object is, faithfully and simply to collect what the distortions early introduced by the nations themselves, and afterwards the scorn and aversion of Christians have left remaining of heathenism.

(1966, III:xx)

Against Schlegel, Grimm believed that Christianity had never been a popular (*volksmäßig*) force amongst the German people but rather that

It came from abroad, it aimed at supplanting the time-honoured indigenous gods whom the country revered and loved. These gods and their worship were part and parcel of the people's traditions, customs and constitution. Their names had their roots in the people's language and were hallowed by antiquity....The new faith came in escorted by a foreign language, which the missionaries imparted to their disciples and thus exalted into a sacred language, which excluded the slighted mother-tongue from almost all share in public worship.

(1966, I:4)

These surviving indigenous elements, for Grimm, had re-emerged during the Reformation, best exemplified by Martin Luther who had advocated a religion without ecclesiastical trappings such as churches, clergy and Catholic imagery. For Grimm, Luther's contribution in this regard recalled the ancient Germanic affinity for simple religious expression rooted in the experiences and aspirations of the ancient German *Volk* as portrayed by Tacitus and connected to a love of their homeland. He went so far as to claim, in his preface to the second edition of the *DM*, that 'It was no accident, but a necessity, that the Reformation arose first in our country, and we should long ago have given it our undivided allegiance, had not a stir been made against it from abroad' (1966, II:xxxvii–xxxviii). For him the Reformation thus signalled a return to the original beliefs—the natural religion—of the ancient Germans and represented the reassertion of their indomitable spirit: 'As in language and myth, so in the religious leanings among the peoples there is something indestructible' (1966, II:xxxviii). The impetus behind the whole of the *DM* was thus to recover the religion of the oldest Germans and in doing so, to make contact with the inherent spirit of the Germanic peoples. However, as Williamson remarks, 'Grimm's Germanic religion looked remarkably like an enlightened or liberal form of Protestantism' (2004:105).

In reconstructing the religion of the ancient Germans Grimm sought to accomplish three things, all of which were intertwined with his nationalist leanings. Firstly, he wanted to demonstrate the ancient autochthony of the German religion and myth traditions which he achieved by frequently citing Tacitus' *Germania* and Sturluson's *Prose Edda* as authoritative sources in this regard. In the preface to the second edition of the *Deutsche Mythologie* he took his cue from Tacitus' *Germania*, hinting that, in the past, it had been used erroneously to suggest that the Germans' owed their lore to the Romans rather than to their own unique and ancient traditions. His subsequent statements in this regard contain many of the stock themes that characterised his attitude to the nationalistic value of indigenous myth, to the Germanic

past more generally, and to the implicit value he accorded to philological methods. He suggested that mythology could be reconstructed on the same principles of language classification—as well as exemplifying the persistent thread of argument that runs throughout the *DM* regarding the retrievability of Germany's indigenous sources:

One may fairly say, that to deny the reality of this [indigenous Germanic] mythology is as much as to impugn the high antiquity and the continuity of our language: to every nation a belief in gods was as necessary as language. No one will argue from the absence or poverty of memorials that our forefathers at any given time did not practise their tongue, did not hand it down; yet the lack or scantiness of information is thoughtlessly alleged as a reason for despoiling our heathenism, antecedent to the conversion, of all its contents, so to speak. History teaches us to recognise in language, the farther we are able to follow it up, a higher perfection of form, which declines as culture advances; as the forms of the thirteenth century are superior to our present ones, and those of the ninth and the fifth stand higher still, it may be presumed that German populations of the first three centuries of our era, whose very names have never reached us, must have spoken a more perfect language than the Gothic itself. Now if such inferences as to what is non-extant are valid in language, if its present condition carries us far back to an older and oldest; a like proceeding must be justifiable in mythology too, and from its dry watercourses we may guess the copious spring, from its stagnant swamps the ancient river....

If the heathens already possessed a finely articulated language, and if we concede to them an abundant stock of religious myths, then song and story could not fail to lay hold of these, and to interweave themselves with the rites and customs. *That such was the case we are assured by Tacitus.*

(1972:411; my emphasis)

His second task was to recover the 'national' past by creating a meaningful religious narrative that would link that past to the difficulties and concerns of the present. Thus, Grimm's descriptions of the ancient Germans struggling against the incursions of a foreign Christianity, and his allusions to Tacitus' *Germania* and the defeat of the Romans by Arminius, drew much of its rhetorical force from the parallels it invoked with the current French occupation. In the *DM* he spun a tale of resistance, as the peasants and country folk held onto the old religion under the outward trappings of Christianity. The *DM* was thus intended to be an inspirational and therapeutic guide for Grimm's fellow Germans, offering a model of nationalistic resistance against the French:

As past and future, the lost and the expected paradise, meld together in the imagination of the people, so they believe in the awakening from the mountain sleep of their beloved kings and heroes: Friedrich and Karl, Siegfried and perhaps also Dietrich.⁷ That is the real sign of the epic, that it secures eternal and imperishable permanence for its figures. But Siegfried is also Wotan, Dietrich is Wotan, Karl is Wotan, and according to the *Muspilli* [a ninth-century Bavarian poem], Wotan returns to the world a rejuvenated, reawakened god.

⁷ Friedrich refers to Friedrich Barbarossa and Karl to Charlemagne. Dietrich was a popular hero in German legend and literature whose story is told in the collection of legends known as the *Dietrichsage*. He also appears in the *Nibelungenlieder*. The tales seem to be based on the historical figure, Theodoric the Great, an Ostrogoth king who ruled Italy from 493–526 CE.

Grimm, seems here to create an analogy between the resurrection of Wotan (Odin) and the revival of the German people's fighting spirit.

The third task of the *DM* was closely related to the second and bears on the attempt described in earlier chapters to purge German, and indeed European, history of any Semitic influences. In Grimm's schema, the myths and legends of the ancient Germans took over the role once assigned to the stories of the Hebrew Bible. He insisted that the Germanic myths stood closer to the original Indo-European sources than the Christian-Jewish myths, which he described, echoing Herder, as 'distorted' and 'torn' from their original context (1966, II:802).

The *DM* was encyclopaedic in its scope and detail, serving as a compendium of every imaginable aspect of the ancient German religion and its myth traditions, and building its case through the sheer force of the numerous examples presented. Grimm's method was to combine references to textual sources such as Tacitus' *Germania* and the *Prose Edda* with frequent allusions to extant folk customs and tales that then, in turn, served to confirm those very textual sources. In an implicit invocation of Herder's view that these tales were transmitted patrilinearly, he sought both to demonstrate an unbroken chain of continuity and to assert the precedence of oral narrative forms:

If these numerous written memorials have only left us sundry bones and joints, as it were, of our old mythology, its living breath still falls upon us from a vast number of Stories and Customs, *handed down through lengthened periods from father to son.*

(1966, II:ix; my emphasis)

The story that Grimm tells in his introduction to the *DM* is one where Christianity, via the Romans, slowly spread throughout Europe, starting in Greece and Rome and then moving to France (Gaul) in the second and third centuries CE. The Goths were then the first of the 'Teutonic people' to embrace Christian doctrine through the fourth to the sixth centuries, followed by the Suevi in Spain. Grimm then deals with the conversion of a number of other Germanic tribes in the following centuries (Grimm 1966, I:2). He lists these conversions by way of introducing his argument in favour of including Norse traditions in the study of Teutonic mythology because the other northern tribes had 'clung to heathenism longer and more tenaciously' (1966, I:9) than any others, and further, were clearly related to German 'heathenism' (1966, I:10).

He goes on to list a number of grounds upon which the affinity of the German and Norse mythologies can be established, all of which demonstrate the core premises upon which his comparative method rested: (1) the closeness of their languages and the form or style of their poetry; (2) the existence of similar terms for religious worship; (3)

the 'identity of mythic notions and nomenclature'; (4) the fact that both mythologies are concerned with heroic legend and that their genealogies merge with each other's; (5) the 'mingling of the mythic element with names of plants and constellations' which Grimm holds to be 'an unaffected vestige of the primeval intimate union between religious worship and nature'; (6) the way in which both traditions' gods have been transformed into devils under the influence of Christianity but their names have survived in 'disguised ejaculations, oaths, curses, protestations', nonetheless, 'The popular religion of the Catholics, particularly in the adoration of saints, includes a good many and often graceful and pleasing relics of paganism'; (7) the survival of 'god-myths' in the names of the days and months, folktales, nursery rhymes, games, and curses; and (8) the mixture of ancient pagan beliefs with the systems of law (1966, I:10–11).

The main source that Grimm turned to in order to demonstrate the affinity of the Norse and German sources was the *Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturluson (1178–1241).⁸ As with Jones' theory of the kinship between Sanskrit and the European languages, the *Edda* was also held as evidence that the German people had originated from Asia (Williamson 2004:99). The prologue of the *Edda* starts with the story of the founding of Asgard, the home of the Æsir (said to be descendents of King Priam of Troy) in the cold reaches of northern Europe following their migration from Asia Minor at the end of the Trojan War. At the end of the prologue and again at the end of the second section of the *Edda*—*Gylfaginning* (the 'Beguiling of Gylfi')—the process whereby the kings of the migrating Æsir came to be honoured as gods is described, stating that it developed from worship of the earth and other natural forces. It is in the *Gylfaginning* where the clearest description of the religion of the Æsir is provided.

It begins with the story of how Gylfi, a Swedish King, was tricked out of some of his lands by one of the Æsir newcomers (a woman named Gefjun). He visits the Æsir in Asgard, disguised as a beggar and calling himself Gangleri, to find out whether their success is due to their own skill or to the gods they worship. The Æsir, who have the gift of prophecy, foresee his arrival and prepare what the text calls 'deceptions of the eye' (1916:14), namely the creation of a hall covered with gilded shields like tiles, which Sturluson, drawing on the *Poetic Edda*, calls Val-hall. He is welcomed hospitably, and is

⁸ Grimm appeared to be following up Herder's argument in his dialogue 'Iduna, oder der Apfel der Verjüngerung' (Iduna, or the Apples of Rejuvenation), published in Schiller's journal *Die Horen* in 1796, in which he argued in favour of using the Nordic gods as the basis for a new national literature. On the debate over the authenticity of the *Edda* as a source of Germanic myth see Williamson 2004:102.

ushered into a hall in which three men—Hárr (High), Janhárr ('Just-as-high') and Thridi ('Third')—sit on three thrones. On being asked by them to explain his visit, he says that he desires to learn whether there are any wise men within Asgard. Hárr tells him that he may question them to establish their wisdom but that his life depends on proving himself wiser than them. Gylfi then begins his questions by asking them 'Who is foremost, or oldest, of all the gods?' (1916:15) and in return he is told about the king of their gods, All-Father, the beginning of the world, the origin of the giants and the gods, (of whom the chief, Odin, turns out to be the same as All-Father), the creation of the earth and humankind, the creation of night and day, sun and moon, and then numerous stories of the various gods and goddesses. He is also told about Odin's hall (Val-hall). Finally, the story of the twilight of the gods (Ragnarok) in their last battle against the giants, the destruction of the world and its subsequent renewal is narrated, all in response to Gylfi's questioning. Before Gylfi can ask any further questions there is a loud crash and the Æsir and their hall disappear because they are unable to answer any more questions. Gylfi appears to have won the contest but is cheated out of the spoils of victory (the return of his lands). The final portion of the *Gylfaginning* tells how the Æsir decided to adopt the names of the gods in the stories they have told so that people will think that they themselves are deities. Sturluson ends the section by suggesting that the myths told of the Æsir are really allegories of the events in the Trojan War.

It was the detail about the Norse gods in the *Edda* that enabled Grimm to suggest that the earliest religion of the people throughout the German territories was the cult of Wotan (superseded in the Norse mythology of the *Edda* by Odin) who was the god of thunder and the leader of the Æsir (1966, I:Ch. 7). Despite all the evidence to the contrary, Grimm attributed to these early Germans a primitive (euhemerist) monotheism, centred on Wotan, based on his assumption that

Monotheism is a thing so necessary, so natural, that almost all heathens, amidst their motley throng of deities, have consciously or unconsciously ended by acknowledging a supreme god, who has already in him the attributes of all the rest, so that these are only to be regarded as emanations from him, renovations, rejuvenescences of him.

(1966, I:147)

Thus Wotan was not just an anthropomorphised sky god but also a metaphysical force, creating the creatures of the earth, granting fertility to fields, inspiring poets, and granting wishes and good luck. More interestingly, Grimm suggests that the early Germans, the Saxons in particular, traced the genealogies of their kings and heroes back to Wotan (1966, I:147–162). While the tracing of ancestry through the

male line, and the belief in a father God are not unique to the ancient Germans (at least in Grimm's reading), their significance and superimposition in this context indicates to me confirmation of the broader patrilineal preoccupations and assumptions of the German national mythology as constructed by the romantic scholars and writers of the nineteenth century, an aspect I will directly address towards the end of this chapter. Indeed, Grimm frequently aligned the German *Vorzeit* with specifically masculine attributes and suggested that it marked a chain of patriarchal inheritance through the generations from antiquity until the Middle Ages:

One has only to recognise the mild and manly spirit of our higher antiquity in the purity and power of the national laws, or the talent inherited by the thirteenth century in its eloquent, inspired poems, in order justly to appreciate legend and myth, which in them had merely struck root once more.

(1966, II:ix)

According to Grimm, the worship of Wotan was accompanied by cultic practices centred on sacrificial offerings to appease the gods or to thank them for their bounty (1966, I:Ch. 3). Grimm drew heavily on existing folk custom at this point in order to demonstrate the survival of these cultic practices in certain Christian sacraments, for example, arguing that the Christian Eucharist had been preceded by the practice amongst the early Germans of collecting the sacrificial blood of animals which was then mixed with beer and drunk by the participants in the ancient rites (*ibid.*). He was continually at pains to explain contemporary practices in terms of this ancient religion and to portray it in a favourable light compared to the foreign influences of Christianity. He suggested, for example, that these ancient Germanic ancestors had very little need for their mediating role of priests, the male head of each household usually conducting rituals in his own home (1966, I:74). According to Grimm, the collective rites of the ancient German communities took place in sacred forest groves, marked by a sacred tree—with its obviously phallic connotations—which was decorated with flowers or the carcasses of animals, and with images sometimes carved into their trunks. The vestiges of such practices, he maintained, still flourished amongst the peasant classes of his day (1966, I:Ch. 3). He claimed that 'The earliest testimonies to the forest-cultus of the Germans are furnished by Tacitus' (1966, I:61).⁹ One such tree was the 'Irminsul',¹⁰

⁹ Tac. *Ger.* IX: '[The Germans'] holy places are woods and groves, and they apply the names of deities to that hidden presence which is seen only by the eye of reverence'; Tac. *Ger.* XXXIX: 'The grove is the centre of their whole religion. It is regarded as the cradle of the race and the dwelling-place of the supreme god to whom all things are subject and obedient'.

¹⁰ Irmin was the war god of the Saxons, son of Mannus, whom Tacitus mentions (Tac. *Ger.* II), and ancestor of the tribe of the Herminones. The Old Norse form of *Irmin* was *Jörmun* and

which according to Grimm was a 'great wooden column...set up and worshipped under the open sky, its name signifies universal all-sustaining pillar', and he further noted its phallic symbolism (1966, I:97). During the conversion of Saxony in 772, Charlemagne ordered the Irminsul at Eresburg Castle near Paderborn cut down before finally forcing the Saxon king Widukind to be baptised in 785 (Mayr-Harting 1996:1116). Grimm suggested that this paradigmatic event marked the end of open pagan worship in Germany and that thereafter the newly converted Christians built churches on these previously sacred sites in order to preserve and remember them as religious places of worship (1966, I:65).

With the *DM* taken as a whole, Grimm's reconstruction of the ancient German religion is remarkably comprehensive, especially given, in reality, the paucity of the sources available. According to Grimm the ancient Germans had migrated from Asia, bringing with them religious beliefs and practices that were derived from the Brahmanic religion of India but which had developed their particularly Germanic character when these tribes had settled in northern Europe and had encountered its climate and geography. In addition to the aforementioned religious practices and beliefs, there was a strong belief in the migration of souls after death, particularly those of heroes who were carried from battlefields to the halls of Walhalla (*Val-Hall*) by the Valkyries (semi-divine female warriors) where they would feast and participate in games of manly combat. The survival of the early Germanic cultus, under the rubric of Catholic festivals and holidays, had led to the Protestant Reformation, where Martin Luther had called for a religion without churches, priests, or idolatrous imagery, indicating the indomitable character of the German people in resisting foreign influences and dogma.

The overall effect of the *DM* was to create the impression that the contemporary religious and geographical divisions in nineteenth-century Germany concealed an underlying cultural and religious unity which, though it lay dormant, was not extinct. The moral of the tale Grimm told was that where Germany had once been true to its indigenous spirit, it would be so again when the German people were recalled to their noble pre-Christian traditions. As Williamson puts it, 'In the *Deutsche Mythologie* what was most local and quaint became that which was most national and...the landscape

interestingly, just like Ygg, it was one of the names of Odin. Yggdrasil was the yew or ash tree on which Odin sacrificed himself, and which connected heaven and earth. It appears, thus, that *Irminsul* may have represented a world tree corresponding to Yggdrasil among the Saxon tribes. See Mayr-Harting 1996. At the time of Charlemagne, there were probably numerous Irmin pillars standing and Grimm cites the twelfth-century *Kaiserchronik* as mentioning several (1966, I:108).

suddenly seemed to be the repository of a noble religion rather than base superstition' (2004:112). Grimm's defiant and triumphalist narrative thus established a national mythology where the foreignness of Catholicism was superseded by a newly configured, historically aware, and purely German Protestantism and which could appeal to a public demoralised by French imperialism and religious disunity. The result of the *Deutsche Mythologie*, and of the *KHM*, was that the basic elements of a German national mythology had fallen into place by the end of the 1830s. An epic literary tradition had been uncovered, folktales were widely read, and the outlines of a Germanic pantheon had been reconstructed. Moreover, the elements of this mythology had been connected to the geography of Germany: the Rhine River, the Teutoburg Forest, and the North Sea. On the basis of his findings in the *DM*, Grimm was thus able to make an implicit claim for the central mediating role of scholarship, one that placed the scholar in the role of national champion, preserving and disseminating the vernacular culture and granting it the stamp of 'scientific' authority. It was only the scholar, for Grimm, following the scientific methods of *Germanistik* (German studies/philology), who had the skill and insight to resurrect the past for the present. Romantic nationalists like Grimm sought to undermine existing ethnic traditions by recreating the past as one of continuous creativity, something he achieved by rooting the origins of the German people back in time, and, above all, by identifying a golden age that authenticated the German character. In search of collective authenticity, the romantics focused on the earliest emergence of peoples when their original character was most clearly displayed. It was a compelling vision and what emerged in the aftermath of the *DM* was a much broader public interest in the mythology of the German people, with writers and artists outside of the universities working with what they considered to be a now established repertoire of national 'myths' which formed the literary-religious patrimony of the German nation. In the final section of this chapter, therefore, I want briefly to examine the more public expressions that this scholarly production of a national mythology assumed in the years leading up to and after German unification and the establishment of the *Kaiserreich* in 1871.

II. Monuments, Masculinity, and the German Character

By the 1830s, the basic elements of a German 'national mythology' had fallen into place largely due to the efforts of the Grimm brothers and their contemporaries. The picture that they had presented of the ancient Germans served as an inspirational model for

more literary and artistic creations, and political movements. Artists began to produce paintings, songs and stories based on the Hermann (Arminius) legends, Wotan, and the *Nibelungenlieder*. Societies were formed to promote native dress, national sporting associations, gymnastic, arts and crafts societies. Architecture in the form of monuments also provided a medium through which nationalist ideals of German character, history, and unity could be expressed. While these images and symbols achieved far more popularity among the educated classes than in other sectors of Germany society, they served nonetheless to make Germany's 'glorious past' a national object of popular focus and interest, reflecting what Rudy Koshar has suggested was the 'national state's need to create objectified symbols of national identity that offered a point of contact and easily recognized visual referent for many disparate groups' (1998:23). Where mythologists and *Germanistik* scholars had provided a map of national identity through recourse to past literature, folklore, and history, it was now artists, writers, and architects who translated their efforts into the national landscape, seeking to return the people to a memory of a national archetype that was disseminated according to a visual grammar of national unity. I want to examine in what follows, two examples of the symbolisation of national unity and character found in the paintings of the romantic artists Georg Friedrich Kersting (1785–1847) and Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840) and in the Niederwald and Hermann (*Hermannsdenkmal*) monuments that were erected in the second half of the nineteenth century, in order to explore the ways in which the myths of the ancient Germans that Grimm 'retrieved' were intertwined with doctrines of what the nation state should be. In each case Tacitus' *Germania* served as the unifying thread, directing the German people to recall their ancient autochthony and nobility. Further, I want to show how a patrilineal and fraternal ethos directed efforts in this regard.

The symbolisation of German national identity was intimately connected to the German landscape which was seen to embody all the qualities of Germanness and to foster in its inhabitants a natural and abiding love for the Fatherland. However, in the same way that German myth and folklore were essentially invented, the image of the landscape that was promoted during the nineteenth century was itself an elaborate fiction designed to root German culture in its 'native' soil where the *Volk* and the rural topography were deemed to form an essential unity along the lines suggested by Herder but which, with the advent of industrialisation, was fast disappearing. In the period from the 1840s to 1900 Germany overtook Britain to become the second biggest

industrial power after America and the population consequently shifted from being predominantly rural to being urban to the extent that by 1907 48% of Germans lived outside of their place of birth (Boa and Palfreyman 2000:1). Nonetheless, the sacralisation of the rural landscape that the efforts of artists and architects sought to achieve preserved an image of the German territories as resolutely pastoral. This image operated through a series of oppositions which set the countryside against cities, tradition against modernity, nature against artificiality, organic culture against civilisation, fixed, familiar and rooted identity against cosmopolitanism, hybridity and foreignness. As Celia Applegate suggests, these oppositions 'formed part of a difficult negotiation as individuals struggled to find a stable ground from which to cope with rapid change...and to express a sense of national as well as local belonging and to celebrate...a community of common purpose' (1990:17).

Both Kersting and Friedrich drew their images of German life and character from the forests and rural landscapes of Germany, nostalgically depicting a timeless way of life and valorising, in particular, the fraternal bonds between men who were placed in the landscape as its defenders and sons. Clark (1996) suggests that these images served to compensate for the lack of monuments to the nationalist-voluntarist efforts of groups like the Landwehr militia and Lützow volunteer corps in the Wars of Liberation. Those that did exist merely commemorated the role of the various German monarchies in defending the Fatherland against Napoleon, a form of memorialisation conspicuously at odds with the view of the Wars expressed by the ex-volunteers. As Clark notes,

The Wars of Liberation were wars of governments and monarchs, of dynastic alliances, rights and claims, in which the chief concern was to re-establish the balance of power in Europe. But they also involved militias and politically motivated volunteers. Of just under 290,000 officers and men mobilized in Prussia, 120,565 served in units of the Landwehr, a militia recruited locally (and largely voluntarily) from the civilian population....In addition to the Landwehr regiments...there were a variety of 'Free corps', units of voluntary riflemen recruited from Prussian and other German states. Unlike their colleagues in the regular army they swore oaths of loyalty not to the king of Prussia but to the German fatherland.

(1996:552)

Thus, these ex-volunteers conceived of the victory against the French as having been secured by the common people rather than the result of monarchical resistance, a view which, as Clark points out, 'contrasted crassly with conservative recollections of the war years' (*ibid.*) as represented by the political journalist Friedrich Gentz (1764–1832).

For him it was 'the princes and their ministers' who 'achieved the greatest [feats]' in the war against Napoleon and he suggested that

Not all the demagogues and pamphleteers of the world and of posterity can take that away from them....They prepared the war, founded it, created it. They did even more: they led it, nourished and enlivened it....Those who today in their youthful audacity suppose that they overturned the tyrant, couldn't even have driven him out of Germany.

(1838, III:39–40; trans. Clark 1996:552)

The absence of a monument to the efforts of the 'common people' during the Wars was a theme to which both Friedrich and Kersting returned repeatedly in their paintings. Friedrich and the nationalist Arndt worked together on a sculpture of Scharnhorst, a volunteer who had died in battle in 1813 but they received no official support for the project, leading Friedrich to remark in a letter to Arndt in 1814 'I am not surprised that no memorials are being erected, neither to mark the great cause of the *Volk*, nor to the magnanimous deeds of great German men. As long as we remain manservants to the princes, nothing of this sort will ever happen' (in Hermand 1982:224).

Nineteenth-century Prussian schoolbooks followed this version of events but the accounts of the Wars retold by the ex-volunteers focused on their own efforts. It was this version that Friedrich and Kersting promoted in their paintings and sculptures. Kersting, who had himself been a volunteer, painted a series of portraits of volunteers, most famously his *On Sentry Duty* (1815) which depicted three friends—Ferdinand Hartmann, Theodor Körner, and Karl Friedrich Friesen—who had fought alongside Kersting in the same company of the Lützow Freikorps and who had died in the wars. The three friends are shown in the loose black garb of the *altddeutsch* uniform of the *Freikorps* in the midst of a deep oakwood. As Schama suggests, the figures in the painting are

Posed in complementary attitudes, the upright and vigilant figure balanced by another figure at rest (but only after the insignia of the iron cross has given proof of his valor in combat). Paradoxically, the most famous of the three, Theodor Körner, the young Saxon poet who had written stirring calls to arms...is shown in the glades, pensive and melancholy as if mediating the heavy price of patriotic sacrifice.

(2004:105)

The work has been described as a 'painted monument', standing in for the lack of an official site of commemoration to the efforts of the volunteers. Körner's memorial and burial site was itself sited beneath a massive and ancient oak and it became something of

a site of pilgrimage for nationalists throughout the nineteenth century.¹¹ The regular use of trees and woodland in many of the paintings by Kersting and Friedrich perhaps signal a reproductive motif insofar as it confirms to the botanical metaphor discussed above in the context of linguistic family trees. Perhaps forest symbolism was one way of the painters encoding an idea of traditions handed from generation to generation and of the land nourishing the people over centuries.

Friedrich's landscape paintings regularly depict idyllic rural scenes that are simultaneously detailed and impressionistic. Friedrich rejected the form of landscape painting that sought to reproduce nature as realistically as possible, arguing that 'a picture should not portray nature itself but only remind us of it. The task of the artist is not the accurate representation of air, water, rocks and trees, but his soul, his sensations, should be mirrored in his artwork' (in Mitchell 1982:416). The 'soul' of Friedrich was clearly preoccupied with cultivating nationalist sentiment, portraying the rural landscape as a place of beauty and stability. Significantly, most of his landscapes are empty of people, an aspect that perhaps suggests that the idealisation of the countryside which was such a central aspect of romantic thought, was predominantly a bourgeois projection. The rapid migration of the rural population to metropolitan centres had originally started in the seventeenth century. As Abrahams points out, 'there are manifest ironies involved in this process of sentimentalizing a way of life only after those who once practised it have been taken from the land' (1993:4).¹²

The motif of woodland is also repeated in many of Friedrich's paintings of volunteers and appears to represent a symbol of ancient German valour and manliness, recalling the Battle of the Teutoburg forest retold by Tacitus. Friedrich again uses the image of the oak tree in his most famous painting *Ulrich von Hutten's Grave* which depicts a man, also dressed in the *altdeutsche* uniform of the volunteer brigades, leaning on (the imaginary) tomb of Hutten on which are engraved the names of well known patriots such as Arndt, and Jahn amongst others. The figure is enclosed by the arches of a ruined gothic church covered in shrubs and weeds, which Clark argues 'transform the painting into a lamentation over the failure of memory and the triumph of forgetfulness'

¹¹ In June 1845, on the thirtieth anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, many of the veterans who had served in volunteer regiments congregated at Körner's memorial. See Clark 1996:552; Schama 2004:105–106.

¹² Eugene Lunn argues similarly that the 'discovery of the people' was related to the fact that the 'kind of indigenous folk arts that romantic writers sought to rescue were already in danger of disappearing' and that this suggests that 'the romantic populists were well aware...of the changes that were eroding the primitive, "folk" way of life' (1986:483).

(1996:573). It should be recalled that Hutten was a champion of the cult of Arminius as a means of resisting papal control and it was in the nineteenth century that he was hailed as the father of German nationalism by the likes of Friedrich and Kersting. The significance of the painting, therefore, as Schama suggests, is that it brings together

the most recent *Liberatores Germaniae* with the most ancient, Arminius himself, and von Hutten's chosen historical doppelgänger. And if the connection between ancient and modern Germania were not already sufficiently indicated, a lived blood-red dawn illuminates a young German oak rising from the tomb and a tall fir tree that provides the canopy of the sepulchre: the images respectively, of national and spiritual resurrection.

(2004:108–109)

Another painting by Friedrich entitled the '*Chasseur*' in the Forest makes similar allusions to a series of patriotic symbols, not least Arminius' victory over Varus. The painting depicts a lone *chasseur* ('soldier') entering a dense forest. A raven perches on a felled tree stump, perhaps singing a warning to the soldier. The soldier's helmet, as Schama suggests 'seems strangely Roman, as if borrowed from one of Varus' lost centurions' (2004:106). The trees themselves surround and dwarf the soldier, and perhaps they signify 'the massed troops of the reborn Germania' (*ibid.*).

The paintings of Kersting and Friedrich taken together bring together three important elements in the nationalist movement that emerged in the aftermath of the Wars of Liberation: landscape, manly comradeship, and the figure of Arminius as the archetypal German hero. The ideal of male friendship forged in the conflict of war was a powerful image of patriotism for many Germans in the nineteenth century, exemplifying the virtues of discipline, honour, courage, discipline, competitiveness, stoicism, and dignity, and all of which were considered to be indispensable to struggle to found a nation state as I discussed in Chapter 4. The link between patriotism and fraternal bonds between men were seen to be inseparable (Mosse 1982b:352) and it was Arminius who in this regard stood at the helm of the German character as the paradigm of manly virtue.

It is no surprise therefore, that the figure of Arminius as Hermann was soon deemed the national symbol *par excellence*. From the 1840s onwards many plans were drawn up to create monuments celebrating him as a German national hero. Karl-Friedrich Schinkel, for example drew plans for a monument of Hermann to be erected on the site of his famous victory in the region of the Teutoburger Wald. Schinkel explicitly followed Friedrich in weaving together elements of the native landscape with the German myths retrieved by Grimm. The figure of Hermann, leaning on his sword, dressed in a popularly imagined Teutonic style with winged helmet and sweeping

cloak, was to be set upon a massive pedestal of roughly-hewn rock emerging above the treeline of the oaks which surrounded it (see Schama 2004:109). Schinkel's design was never to be realised but in 1838 the sculptor Joseph Ernst von Bandel was commissioned to produce a *Hermannsdenkmal* ('Hermann monument') in order to commemorate the Battle of the Teutoburg Wald on a site just south of Detmold near Bielefeld and between the Ems and Weser rivers. Bandel's design drew upon German myths derived from the *Nibelungelieder* and of course from the image of the ancient Germans described by Tacitus. As Schama suggests,

Von Bandel may not have been the most flamboyantly inspired of monumental sculptors but he evidently knew his public. He provided it with exactly the image of the Wagnerian hero it expected: whiskery, wing-helmeted, flourishing the invincibly tempered Nothung¹³ in the skies, a repatriated version of Tacitus's Arminius as 'the liberator of Germany'.
(2004:112)

The statue took over forty years to construct and was paid for by contributions from all the states of Germany, including Austria. However, with the defeat inflicted upon Austria by the Prussian troops and their allies in 1866, von Bandel aligned himself with the Prussian Kaiser Wilhelm I (1797–1888) who visited his workshop in 1869 to inspect the work in progress. Von Bandel began to promote the Kaiser as the new Arminius and when the monument was finally finished in 1875 (four years after the establishment of the *Kaiserreich*), the official commemorative book identified Wilhelm as the successor to Arminius as the bringer of unity and national freedom (Schama 2004:112). The official opening of the monument reinforced the association, as Schama describes it:

It was orchestrated as a stupendous imperial triumph, with hundreds of banners and pennants flying the imperial colors and the arms of the now elaborately obsequious dependent princes of the empire. The Arminius Redivivus, Kaiser Wilhelm I, sat in an immense pseudo-medieval pavilion at the top of the Groteburg listening to a Luther preacher fulminate passionately on German destiny. Three actors got up in Romano-Teutonic costume impersonated the hero, their swords held aloft in the August sunshine.
(ibid.)

The monument itself stood at 53.46 metres, set on a circular temple made of sandstone bricks with ten columns foliated at the capitals. At the base of the temple, a flight of steps led to a place from which to view the dense forest of the Teutoburg. As such, it was not just a commemorative symbol but also made into a sacred space. Anthony

¹³ The Nothung was the mystical and omnipotent sword of the Nibelungen, forged for heroes.

Smith explains how monuments of this type might contribute to the sacralisation of the native landscape when he suggests that

legendary or historical figures are venerated by the people for the benefits, material and spiritual, that they bestow on the community, and for the divine blessings they bring on the people. So the places where holy men and heroes walked and taught, fought and judged, prayed and died, are felt to be holy themselves, their tombs and monuments become places of veneration and pilgrimage, testifying to the glorious and sacred past of the ethnic community.

(1997a:14)

In the previous chapter I examined how authenticity was considered to be a vital aspect of the romantic nationalist concern to retrieve folk traditions. Perhaps just as important to German romantic nationalism, however, was territory insofar as the German nation, not having recourse to a civic model of national identity, sought to root itself in a particular terrain, one that was considered to be the historic homeland and to guarantee—in the same way that folklore and myth was believed to—the familial continuity of the contemporary inhabitants with those of the past. In Smith's view, 'the rubric of continuity points to the persistence of cultural components of particular nations' (1999b:11), while reappropriation of the heroic figures of the past represents a 'reaching back into the ethnic past to obtain the authentic materials, and ethos for a distinct modern nation' (1999:12). Placing monuments that celebrated the ancient ancestors of the German people on the native landscape was a way of asserting the nation and its heroes as the products of the land, just as the land was thought, after Herder, to aid the expression of *Völkisch* character and culture. Monuments such as that of Hermann were able to convey the sense, in the aftermath of nearly three-quarters of a century of social turmoil, invasions, and war, that the land was not only inhabited but could now be more truly 'repossessed' and that the golden age of German unity could now be retrieved.

The *Hermannsdenkmal* was one of several such monuments to celebrate the golden age of the German people. In 1842, the Bavarian King Ludwig I (1786–1868) had completed construction of the Walhalla Hall of Fame and Honor, which overlooked the Danube River near Regensburg and was an enormous shrine to Germany's heroes covering 1800 years of German history starting with the Arminius' victory in the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (Williamson 2004:112). Another important monument, this time commissioned to celebrate German unification under the Kaiserreich, was the Niederwald monument that I now want to discuss in some detail, drawing on Patricia

Mazón's helpful account (2000),¹⁴ because it, perhaps even more than the *Hermannsdenkmal*, represented Germany in explicitly gendered terms and recalled Herder's belief in the patrilineal transmission of traditions amongst the *Volk*.

It was in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 that plans for the Niederwald national monument were drawn up. Completed in 1883, it was situated on the Rhine, outside Rüdesheim between Koblenz and Mainz. Because of its size, popularity, and the cost involved in building it, it has often been presented as the most important monument of Imperial Germany (Mazón 2000:162). The monument, like the *Hermannsdenkmal* was intended to be financed by the people in order to reflect their unification, as Lutz Tittel suggests (1979:7–8). The cost proved prohibitive, however, eventually reaching 1.2 million marks, making it the most expensive monument constructed in Germany until then. Instead of coming from the population as a whole, the monument was instead financed by the Reichstag, imperial and princely donations, and contributions from the wealthy and upper-middle class (Tittel 1979:43–74). Tittel concludes that the monument thus ended up being less representative of the German people than of the committee charged with organising the construction of the monument and which consisted of a small group of conservatives supported by the state (1979:120–121). However, there was enormous public interest in the monument as indicated by the lengthy press reports and popular books documenting its building (Mazón 2000:167).

The monument's focal point is a large female statue that represents the nation Germania and stands at just over ten metres (the monument as a whole is thirty-eight metres high). She holds Charlemagne's crown in one hand and the Holy Roman Imperial sword in the other. She stands in front of a throne clothed in chain mail and a breastplate decorated with the insignia of the German eagle and Mazón suggest that the sculpture's features call to mind 'an ideal Teutonic type rather than a real person' (2000:169). In the 1850s and 1860s the figure of Germania had gradually been represented as a symbol of national unity against the backdrop of the passionate debates around the *Klein-* and *Grossdeutsch* solutions to the question of the German nation state (discussed above) and this concept of unity was nourished by a vision of a common enemy (first France, and then Austria) that resulted in a number of increasingly

¹⁴ Most of the available information in the Niederwald monument is in German and my language skills in that regard are not sufficiently capable of reading the material with the care and detail required. Mazón, however, provides a useful survey of the available literature throughout her article.

belligerent depictions of Germania (see Gall 1993: 9, 15–20). The image of Germania on the Niederwald monument conveyed a similarly belligerent stance with the difference that, as Mazón suggests,

No longer did she stand for an undifferentiated yearning for a German nation-state but instead represented the achievements of Bismarck's three wars of unification....What is interesting about the Niederwald Germania is how she has changed from earlier figures, which seemed to encompass all solutions to the German questions, to a Germanic Athena, guardian of Imperial Germany's patriarchal and authoritarian political order.

(2000:171)

Interpretations of the symbolism of the Germania statue varied amongst the populace according to social class and gender. In the main though it was seen as explicitly representative of the national character and virtues. As one author noted, 'we can recognize the virtues of the Germans in this face' suggesting that it embodied 'loyalty, love of the Fatherland, persistence and endurance' (in Mazón 2000:174)

The association that Mazón draws between the Germania statue and Athene is significant. Marina Warner has suggested that Athena was a conventional symbol of the nation in nineteenth-century Europe which she attributes to the 'patriarchal implications of Athene's story' (1985:124) that in turn gave support to the conservative nineteenth-century political and family structures that excluded women from the public sphere (surveyed in Chapter 4 above). She suggests, therefore, that 'The coincidence of the Athenian code and Victorian domestic ideals inspired a renewed, official celebration of the goddess Athena in the 19th century in England, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the United States (1985:125). The story of Athene as told in Hesiod's *Theogony* relates the story of her birth from the head of Zeus who has appropriated female parturition in order to deal with the threat posed by his wife Metis. In Aeschylus' *Oresteia* Athene sides with Orestes to vindicate him of the charge of matricide and she claims that on the basis of her own birth, fathers are the true parents of their offspring, aligning herself in the process with patriarchal values (I discuss this episode in more detail in Chapter 8). Warner argues that Athene's authority and virtue were expressed through the 'metaphor of defensive combat' reflecting her willingness to protect her property and honour. For Warner, the construction of the nineteenth-century symbol of Athene involved several representational steps, the first of which concerned swathing the previously demure and fragile female form in armour in order to achieve the effect of heroism. Moreover, the use of breastplates, swords, and other weaponry in these representations served to masculinise the female body and 'to manifest [women's] good behaviour in recognizing male authority in society' (1985:107). However, the sword

served less as a phallic symbol than as an asexual 'tool of separation, as the instrument which cleaves one in two' (1985:160) and as such symbolised asexual rather than sexual reproduction. Consequently these images were drained of any real association with femininity and projected a virile symbol of autonomous masculine fantasy. As Mazón points out, 'Germania's ancient symbolism was surely not lost on more educated Germans, who would have recognized her as an Athena figure, or as Athena Nike, goddess of victory' and she goes on to suggest that Germania in this guise represented an 'entirely legitimate representation of her fatherland' (2000:174–175).

Mazón is not suggesting here that the Germania statue stood for an atemporal form of patriarchal domination, but rather that because 'male authority in matters both public and private was still firmly ensconced during the Wilhelmine era' (2000:175) and as such the Germania was a response to and a reflection of social norms and values. Moreover, Mazón suggests that the Germania statue has to be interpreted within its overall context which may suggest other possible meanings:

Her colossal size signalled to her contemporaries that she represented the state and, through this, power itself. The message of power was further articulated by attributes that were clear even without reference to Athena. Germania's obvious youth and strength were an allusion to the youth and vigour of the German nation....The [Franco-Prussian] war and the ensuing German victory were apparent in the combination of battle gear with the more ceremonial, flowing lines of her skirt and the garland in her hair; Germania resembles a warrior dressed for a victory celebration. The theme of vigilance is represented in the way in which Germania holds the Imperial sword drawn but not raised, implying a watchful but not necessarily aggressive stance. She looks boldly across the Rhine, her eyes turned away from the Imperial crown that she holds out. The implicit message is that she is the keeper of the Imperial sovereignty symbolized by the crown.

(Mazón 2000:175–176)

As if to confirm this reading, at the laying of the monument's foundation stone, the chairman of the monument's executive committee, Graf zu Eulenberg, was attributed as reciting Germania's 'warning cry' with the following words:

I pointed the tip of my sword toward the heavens
And from the storming came the light of day.
An imperial shield hangs from the oak again,
The young empire arose from battle and victory.
Hear this, my people! And stand by this empire,
Stand by the Kaiser and by your fatherland.

(in Mazón 2000:175)

Consideration of the broader context of the statue involves examination of the pedestal of the monument, a section that comprises about two-thirds of the total memorial. At the base of the statue are richly decorated bas-reliefs and inscriptions depicting specific historical events in the recent past, particularly the beginning of the Franco-Prussian war and the Prussian victory. The images depicted seem to be part of a

project of legitimising the *Kleindeutsch* solution that the *Kaiserreich* represented, resulting in an interesting juxtaposition of the timeless and inclusive aspects of the German past as represented by Germania against the specific events that resulted in the (partial) unification of Germany under the *Kaiserreich*. The monument could thus be read as an attempt to authorise the *Kleindeutsch* and to present it as the natural and most legitimate culmination of the nationalist effort to secure cultural, if not political unity.

From its inception the monument was intended to represent as well as cultivate a feeling of unity and shared traditions amongst the general populace in the newly established nation. Mazón draws attention to how the three design contests that preceded the commissioning of the monument sought models that would commemorate 'the recent victorious and successful, united rising of the German people and of the re-establishment of the German Empire' (in Mazón 2000:176). The concept of 're-establishment' invoked not only the Holy Roman Empire, but looked to a more distant past through its depiction of Germania and implied that the *Kaiserreich* had fulfilled Germany's destiny. In many ways the monument brought together August Schlegel's vision of a medieval *ritterliche mythologie* with that of Grimm's *Deutsche Mythology*, rooted in the pagan past. As Mazón comments,

With her very name, Germania suggested the earliest Germans and their timeless origins. Her dress, however, is a nineteenth-century interpretation of the German fairy-tale world of the Middle Ages....The swans on Germania's skirt allude to Nordic mythology, in which Valkyries took on the form of swans, as described in the *Nibelungenlied*.

(2000:176–177)

In ways probably unintended, therefore, the Niederwald monument was representative of Germany—at least the Germany that was haggled over in the midst of the confessional divide between the romanticism of the Schlegel brothers and that of the Grimms. What the monument was able to achieve was a visual synthesis between these ideas and represented a popularisation of the types of mythology promoted by the romantic nationalists. Perhaps the Niederwald monument was, in an obscure way, in the end a testament to their disparate visions. As Helmut Walser Smith acutely observes, 'Confessional animosities...were not incidental to German nationalism, but the thing itself' (1995:234).

Regardless of how one might interpret the monument, however, what remains is that the design of the monument sought to express a historical and cultural vision of continuity between the German past and present. It was an image, however, that papered over what was still a divided territory. Although the monument invoked the

Holy Roman Empire, Austria which for so long had stood at its helm was not mentioned apart from in the silent subtext of the vanquished enemy. As Koshar suggests, 'The myth of a national community originating in the mists of time increasingly depended on the saturation of local communities with visual markers of the nation's perdurability' (1998:23) and this was necessary because the *Kleindeutsch* form of the *Kaiserreich* was all too obviously only a partial unification of the German territories. All of this points, therefore, in my view, to the fact that political unification was unable to satisfy the yearnings, expressed particularly by the romantic nationalists, but disseminated to the common people, for cultural unity on a *Großdeutsch* model. It was the monument, therefore, rather than the political efforts of Bismarck and his contemporaries, which was able to offer a confirmatory but nonetheless invented representation of German cultural unity by drawing haphazardly from a broad repertoire of national myth and tradition. The images of recent history mingled together with those of the past to transform the contemporary meanings of tradition and modernity so that they became mythicised as one and the same. As Levinger and Lytle suggest, by delineating the essential qualities of the original community as conveyed in monuments like the Niederwald, nationalists were also able to identify what needed to be recovered through collective struggle. The construction of a mythic original identity thus defined the stakes of present-day political action (2001:181).

Mazón points out that while the monument served the purpose of creating a sense of political and cultural unity, it also 'offered lessons in citizenship, defining which individuals were to take an active part in the nation' (2000:184) and her observation is, I believe, significant. The monument served essentially as a didactic device, cultivating patriotism and love for the fatherland as the duty of every citizen but simultaneously specified who was and who was not to be counted amongst the members of the nation as well as delineating the borders of the German territory. I will return to discuss the constitution of citizenship shortly but first I want to examine the issue of territoriality that the monument was able to secure. Jan Penrose suggests that place and territory are 'quite different from space....[S]pace is present whether anyone knows about it or not, but space only becomes a place when it acquires "perceptual unity", and it only becomes a territory when it is delimited in some way' (2002:279). The Niederwald monument was able to transform place (the diverse and disunited German territories) into territory through virtue of its own location in the 'natural' setting of the Niederwald forest overlooking the Rhine (which itself was a potent symbol of

Germanness), leading one commentator to suggest that the area belonged ‘*only now*, through the efforts of our heroic warriors...*completely* to the German fatherland’ (in Mazón 2000:185). Mazón suggests, moreover, that ‘the Rhine occupied a privileged symbolic space. Other major German rivers such as the Danube, which joins Germany and Austria, did not share the same central importance after the *kleindeutsch* solution’ (2002:186). Further, the Niederwald monument was occasionally referred to as a ‘German garden of Eden’ (*ibid.*), suggesting both the natural beauty of its surroundings, a ‘picture of German political innocence and grace’ (Mazón 2000:187), and perhaps even an idyllic origin. The kind of territorialisation that the monument achieved was closely connected to forms of geographical exclusion and inclusion insofar as it created territorial boundaries between the German nation and its neighbours, most particularly Austria and France. However, these exclusions and division of space also corresponded to exclusions and divisions amongst people. As Penrose argues,

When people create territories, they create boundaries that both unite and divide space along with everything that it contains. By combining some people and certain resources and separating them from other people and other resources, the creation of territories gives physical substance and symbolic meaning to notions of ‘us’ and ‘them’ and ‘ours’ and ‘theirs’.

(2002:280)

The Niederwald monument displayed its exclusions and inclusions in this regard in the bas-reliefs at its base, all the more ironic given the intention that it should serve as a unifying symbol of Germanness. In addition to excluding Catholics, Social Democrats, Jews, Poles, and the working class (see Mazón 2000:187–188), the reliefs marginalised one other important group, namely women, from the national community, particularly insofar as it prescribed the forms of political participation. The central bas-relief depicts numerous German princes and soldiers ready for battle with the Kaiser placed in the middle which Mazón suggests depicts the ‘Kaiserreich’s political order’ (2000:188). Women are entirely absent from this main panel and are only depicted in the smaller side sections. One could of course argue that the statue of Germania is a central symbolisation of femininity in the founding of the nation, but as I have discussed above, her representation seems more indicative of an asexual figure who serves as an allegory of German strength and loyalty to the fatherland than as an inclusive image of women. Here her role seems to replicate the purely symbolic role that women were granted within much nationalist discourse as I suggested in Chapter 4. The women that are depicted in the smaller side panels of the monument merely confirm a public/private division of labour that I also suggested was a feature of cultural nationalism. Shown as

weeping over their husbands as they depart for war, comforting their children, or rejoicing at the safe return of their loved ones, they stand in contrast to the stoic and solemn courage of the soldiers preparing for battle. As Mazón suggests, these panels 'depict the threshold of public and private life and present lessons in male and female virtue' (*ibid.*) and further, that feminine and masculine roles are juxtaposed 'showing men taking action and women reacting' (2000:1990).

The men are more obviously aligned—at least visually—with the vigilant and poised image of Germania, symbol of the nation. The subtext thus appears to me to signal an equation of nation with masculinity, which as I discussed in Chapter 4, indicates that nationalism—at least in the nineteenth century—may well have been an expressly masculine enterprise. Perhaps it was for this reason that Germany, almost uniquely amongst other nations, referred to its territory as the 'fatherland' rather than the 'motherland'; it enabled its men to invent themselves as the legitimate sons and heirs of an ancient and noble patrimony which consisted of a natural and abiding connection to the land, chivalrous and ancient institutions that distilled the traditions of the forefathers along the lines suggested by Herder and reinforced by the Grimms, and myths of masculine valour and high pedigree. The lowly status of Germany within Europe throughout its long history and French disparagement of its cultural traditions during the eighteenth century, combined with the French invasions of the nineteenth century, all of which I have surveyed above, perhaps together contributed to a sense of emasculated manhood that was further extended (and exacerbated) by analogy to the divided and susceptible German territory. By asserting the fatherland as a bounded and secure territory as figured by the Niederwald monument, the asexualised Germania figure notwithstanding, and by promoting myths and traditions that would unify the German people, masculine honour could be restored. Moreover, the motifs of unity and synthesis that underwrote the efforts of the romantic nationalists may well have signalled a desire to measure up to the model of autonomous and whole individuality promoted by the Enlightenment *philosophes* but which in Germany was transferred from the individual to the male collective in their fraternal bonds. Thus, I believe that romanticism, as it was articulated in Germany, was an heir to the clarion call of the Enlightenment—Liberty! Equality! Fraternity!—with the one difference being that where the rationalist tradition that produced civic forms of nationalism emphasised liberty and equality as the basis of national identification, the German romantics pinned their hopes on fraternity, a band of brothers united by and in the fatherland.

In the following chapter I want to pursue this relationship between territory and masculinity (specifically in its patrilinear form) and to demonstrate how it was caught up in a search for the original homeland of the German people and was activated as a discourse of differentiation that was predicated on the exclusion of an explicitly feminised Jewish population. To do so I return to the discussion that I began in Chapter 3 that surveyed the increasing interest in, and search for, the origins of the European people in the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. It was a search that was eventually bolstered in the eighteenth century by William Jones' discovery of the affinities between Sanskrit, Latin, Greek and the other European languages which pointed to the recovery of the original language of the human race, and by implication, the homeland and the original race. As I showed in Chapter 3, Jones' discovery contributed to an accumulative rejection of Semitic origins and in what follows I want to examine the particular implications and outcomes that this narrative of origins had in nineteenth-century Germany, a narrative that was, in many ways, the culmination of the search for German identity that I have traced so far.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MYTH AS A DISCOURSE OF DIFFERENTIATION: GERMAN NATIONALISM AND THE MYTH OF ARYAN ORIGINS

This chapter returns to my earlier discussion in Chapter 3 of the broader European search for origins during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in order to trace the ways in which German scholars in the nineteenth century exploited and appropriated the notion of an *Urheimat*. It was a process that was to prove, in addition to the reconstructive efforts of the German romantics surveyed in the previous chapters, decisive in consolidating a belief in the purity and nobility of the German people. I show, in the first section of this chapter, how an initial romantic idealisation of India as the *Urheimat* of the German people, itself a product of the Indo-European hypothesis surveyed in Chapter 3, was eventually replaced by claims for a Germanic homeland and the concomitant assertion of pure Aryan ancestry, both of which were granted legitimacy—or at least focus—by Tacitus’ ethnographical depiction of the ancient Germans, by Herder’s theories regarding the *Volk* and their providential place in history, and by developments in comparative philology and race science. Each in turn served to sanction and strengthen the growing nationalist movement. Section I discusses how the idealisation of India as the *Urheimat* was enabled through the philological efforts of Friedrich Schlegel and others, who sought to recover the *Ursprache* upon which concepts of the original homeland were premised. Section II then shows how the connection between the original homeland and the original language was conflated into a racial discourse that enabled some German scholars to affirm an Aryan origin for the German people. The assertion of India as the original homeland was subsequently rejected and a German *Urheimat* was established in its place resulting in a virulent discourse of differentiation premised on a myth of Aryan origins. In section III I examine the subsequent production and imposition of an anti-Semitic discourse of differentiation that displaced the preoccupation with French imperialism as the focus of German enmity, and look at the way in which it provided an additional focal point for the consolidation of a stable construction of German identity, reinforcing German nationalist sentiment. I thus focus on the German elaboration of ancient origins, and examine the specifically gendered nature of German identity construction in order to

show how the genealogical priorities articulated in the myth of Aryan origins were patrilineal and monogenetic, producing an archetype of Germans as masculine, heroic, and pure in contrast to a projected effeminate Jewishness.¹ The broader implications of this myth of origin and its intersection with patrilineal assertions will be theorised more fully, however, in the following chapters. I end the chapter in section IV by reflecting on the productive function of myth and mythmaking in the politics of German identity,

¹ This chapter is confined to a discussion of developments in the nineteenth century. It does not, therefore, cover the emergence of National Socialism, the 'Final Solution' and the Holocaust in Germany in the twentieth century, despite the fact that in some important ways they could be seen to be the culmination of the search for identity and origins that I am dealing with. I have two reasons for limiting my discussion to this period. Firstly, my intention is to demonstrate the degree to which the German search for national identity both produced and depended on a myth of origins, one which was, as I have argued, initially part of a wider European concern with its own ancestry from the Renaissance onwards. It was in nineteenth-century Germany, however, where it took on a unique urgency, defining the form of German nationalist effort due to the very distinct set of circumstances confronting the Germanic territories at the time discussed in Chapter 4. It is neither necessary nor desirable, in my view to extend my discussion beyond the end of the nineteenth century; to do so would be to impose an unsustainable teleological narrative by implying a causal—and naively linear—connection between the first-century writings of Tacitus, for example, and the events of the Second World War. Further, it would oversimplify and potentially misrepresent the relationship between the German nationalism of the nineteenth century and the violent articulation of German anti-Semitism in the Third Reich, particularly given that anti-Semitism was a Europe-wide phenomenon, that other 'marginalised' groups were also victims of Nazi policies of extermination, and that many similar nationalist movements of the time did not result such policies. However, it is certainly true that Nazi ideology did make frequent use of the myth of Aryan origins as a propaganda tool, and that it amplified *Völkisch* traditions in order to accent Jewish difference and other 'alien' influences against German Aryan purity and homogeneity. There is, nonetheless, some evidence to indicate that Hitler and his government did so selectively and as a way of manipulating the public mood in terms which would be broadly familiar, rather than because of their loyalty to a single, coherent, and historically derived ideology of Aryan superiority (see Kamenetsky 1972, 1977; Dow and Lixfeld 1994). That *Völkisch* myths were employed by the Nazi regime to cultivate nationalistic fervour and to justify its expansionist and anti-Semitic policies indicates, of course, the utility of 'national' myths for political agendas. Thus there is a need for more research into the status and use of myth in National Socialism and the Third Reich (and of course, the story does not end there), but it would take at least a volume to survey such a complex area in any reasonable or satisfactory detail. This chapter will focus instead on the contexts and sources that served as the ground of possibility for imagining the German nation in the nineteenth century through recourse to a myth of Aryan origins. In keeping with my broader understanding in this thesis of the discursive quality of myth, I will show how this myth was simultaneously *produced by* and *was productive of* anti-Semitism.

My second reason for confining my discussion to nineteenth-century Germany is the existence of voluminous scholarly literature on twentieth-century Germany, National Socialism, and the root causes of the Holocaust, all of which provides detailed—if fiercely disputed—documentation of the numerous possible causes of the Nazi rise to power and the virulent anti-Semitism of the Third Reich; to summarise it here would be redundant and would distract from the task at hand. On the origins of Nazism and the Holocaust as well as the intimately connected intellectual debate over the ethics of representational historiography (the *Historikerstreit* or 'Historians' Debate') see Baumann 1989; Fischer 1998; Lindemann 1997; Burleigh 1997; Peukert 1994; Goldhagen 1996; and Henry Friedlander 1995. On Holocaust historiography see Broszat and Friedländer 1988; Baldwin 1990, Saul Friedländer 1992, 1993, 2002; Bernstein 1994; Birn and Volker 1997; Evans 1997; Wehler 1997; Bartov 1998); and Adorno 2003.

showing how the assertion of a common origin, reinforced by mythic schemes of homogeneity and alterity, secured and maintained the sense of autonomy, strength, destiny, and purity that defined popular notions of Germany identity as masculine and monogenetic in the nineteenth century.

I. Romantic Linguistics and the Idealisation of India

The issue of relative cultural prestige, whether racial or cultural, was a central concern for most European countries during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and functioned as a 'morphology of domination' (Pollock 1993:77),² one that ran alongside frequent military conflict within Europe. Many European nations utilised the past (and present) as a signifier of their superior stature: the southern Europeans turned to their illustrious Greek and Roman ancestry to assert their cultural supremacy; the French gestured towards the philosophical achievements of the Enlightenment and their Revolution; the British, in spite of, or perhaps because of, their indefinite racial hybridity, pointed to their colonial and scientific achievements in the present to assert their cultural advancement (Trigger 1981:145). At the turn of the nineteenth century Germany, however, had very little in the way of a noble ancestry to which it could turn with any degree of confidence, apart from a few lines in Tacitus. In addition to the work of the romantic thinkers of the first half of the nineteenth century, Jones' discovery therefore provided the Germans with a convenient and much-needed opportunity to establish their own ancient pedigree by bringing together Tacitus' claim regarding the ancient Germanic autochthony, romantic nationalism's restoration of mythology as a reservoir of German identity, and contemporary speculations regarding the identity of the *Ursprache*, the *Urheimat*, and the *Urvolk*. As Bryant suggests, 'if the Germans could somehow appropriate the mantle of the original Indo-Europeans...they could then lay claim to being the progenitors of all subsequent derivative cultures, be they Greek, Latin, or colonial' (2001:30).

The German philologists and intellectuals of the nineteenth century seized quickly on Jones' acknowledgement of the kinship of Germanic languages and Sanskrit. In this regard, as Lincoln notes, the importance of Herder's writings on the *Volk* in

² Pollock defines this morphology as '...invoking higher knowledge, naturalizing cultural inequality ("revelation", "science", "intuition of the blood"), creating the idea of race and concurrently legislating racial exclusivity, asserting linguistic hierarchy and claiming superiority for the language of the masters, and securing an order of domination by monopolizing "life chances" such as forms of literacy' (1993:78).

conditioning the German response to Jones' theories should not be underestimated: 'Germans were relieved of the need to compete with Greeks and Romans, for they now discovered themselves as part of the same primordial group' (1999:55). The question is why Germans should seize on the idea of 'Indo-European' origins more firmly than any other group of Europeans. In order to understand the German quest for an ancient pedigree I will trace the emergence, in Germany, of what Poliakov refers to as the 'myth of Aryan origins' (1974).

I have already shown that in late eighteenth-century Europe India was a popular candidate for the original homeland but that in Britain this theory was rejected due to colonial exigencies. In early nineteenth-century Germany, an Indian *Urheimat* also initially proved an irresistible thesis for a group of scholars, poets, and philosophers led by Friedrich Schlegel and influenced by Herder's belief that the Germans should 'seek an affiliation with Mother India' (Bryant 2001:19).³ For them, India, as discovered in its ancient Sanskrit sources, seemed to confirm and to bear all the hallmarks of the romantic vision of a golden age of natural religion and the innocent childhood of humankind. In keeping with the broader romantic agenda, as Raymond Schwab suggests, 'Sanskrit was the providential answer...to the German Romantics' long appeals for the light of the Orient' (1984:13), appeals that were, at least in part, the result of the rejection of biblical ethnology. In this regard, it should be remembered that the rejection of India as the birthplace of Indo-European civilisation in Britain was related to an ideology of progress upon which colonial endeavours were justified, in contrast to the providential discourse of romanticism. Thus providence and progress became a functional pair in the intellectual struggle over origins and over interpretations of historical causality and continuity. In Germany a proto-nationalist doctrine of divine providence, popular since the time of Martin Luther and the German humanists, influenced the sense that many nineteenth-century German scholars had regarding the divinely ordained role of the German nation in universal history. The theories of an Indian *Urheimat*, at least at first, therefore, seemed to provide the means of confirming the providential place of Germany within world history.

³ Herder is widely held to have been the thinker most influential in cultivating an interest in India amongst the German romantics (Schwab 1984:52–64; Halbfass 1988:69–73). Herder, who referred to India as the 'Orient, soil of God, rightly elected for this purpose' (in Schwab 1984:13), had first become enthralled by India through the English translation by Charles Wilkins (c. 1749–1836) of the *Bhagavad Gītā* (published in 1785) and he used excerpts of it in his *Zerstreute Blätter* ('Jottings') published in 1792. His interest was further peaked by George Forster's German translation of Jones' English translation of *Shakuntala* which Forster (1754–1794) had sent to him in 1791 (he wrote the preface for Forster's second edition of 1803). See Schwab 1984:59.

In this vein, Dorothy Figueira suggests that there were two connected reasons for German interest in India: one was the general romantic preoccupation with the past as a golden age of religion and language; the other was the possibility that the Germans would find their own origins in ancient Sanskrit sources and thus the means to restore the archaic greatness of the Germanic past as portrayed by Tacitus (1994:145–146; see also Bryant 2001:30). Figueira's theory is supported by Raymond Schwab's contention that one of the main reasons for the German enthusiasm for philology and Indology was the German 'inferiority complex' and that it led to what he calls 'the Oriental Renaissance' (1984).⁴ Schwab shows persuasively that this 'second Renaissance' mirrored the recovery of Greek manuscripts and Byzantine commentaries after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, which had generated the first Renaissance when Europe realised and then capitalised upon its noble pedigree. For Schwab, the discovery of the linguistic affiliations between the more ancient Sanskrit and Latin, Greek, and other European languages provided a much-needed opportunity for Germans to assert their own Indo-European ancestry and from there to lay claim to being the progenitors of all subsequent derivative cultures, be they Latin or Greek (1984:45–47; see also Bryant 2001:30–35). I shall show below how such claims were sustained, but first I want to examine the impact of German romantic linguistics on the study of India.

As I suggested in Chapter 1, the romantic movement arose in response to social, political, religious, and philosophical upheavals brought about by the Enlightenment and rapid industrialisation, all of which induced a sense of disorientation and the loss of nostalgically cherished modes of sociability. The romantic sensibility as represented by the *Frühromantik* philosophy surveyed in Chapter 4 was nurtured by the belief that the recovery of the past, of a kind of holistic and harmonious way of life, was the best way of ameliorating the ill effects of modernisation. According to Wilhelm Halbfass, 'the Romantic interest in India was inseparable from a radical critique of the European present' (1988:83), a view well reflected by Friedrich Majer (1771–1818), an influential German orientalist and friend of Herder, who believed that the turmoils brought about by modernisation in Europe could only be remedied through a return to the simplicity and purity of Indian origins (Willson 1964:94). This yearning was graphically employed by Majer's contemporary Johann Joseph Görres (1776–1848) when he pondered the significance of the 'Orient' for contemporary Europeans:

⁴ Schwab (1984:11) takes the term from Edgar Quinet (1803–1875), a French poet, historian, and political philosopher heavily influenced by Herder.

And do you know the land where infant mankind lived its happy childhood years?...Towards the Orient, to the banks of the Ganges and the Indus, it is there that our hearts feel being drawn by some hidden urge—it is there that all the dark presentiments point which lie in the depths of our hearts, and *it is there that we go when we follow the silent river which flows through time in legends and sacred songs to its source*. In the Orient, the heavens poured forth into the Earth....In the primitive cultures of this earth, *the original force must still appear undivided; in them, everything must be contained in the same homogeneity* which would later become separated into the various camps.

(in Halbfass 1988:73–74; my emphasis)

Several important themes are conveyed in this passage that bear on the specific qualities the origin of the Indo-Europeans, and specifically the German people, was thought to contain. Görres here makes a series of connections between the location of an origin, a line of continuity—between the people and their source, the past and the present, and ancient traditions and contemporary yearnings—and a unifying, homogenous, ideal which the origin represents. While the belief in Indic provenance was later transposed to Europe, here Görres beautifully expresses the key elements of the German romantic perspective concerning the means through which the German people might achieve the cultural unity at the heart of the nationalist vision. Returning to their roots or ‘childhood’ in the original Indian *Urheimat* through a remembrance of their traditions—‘legends’ and ‘sacred songs’—would revive the instinctive ‘urge’ embedded in the heart of every true Indo-European and would lead them back to their original unity, a unity that had been fragmented and forgotten through the intervention of time and space. Within the German romantic paradigm, then, as Halbfass notes, ‘The very idea of India assumed mythical proportions; the turn towards India became the quest for the true depths of our own being, a search for the original, infant state of the human race, for the lost paradise of all religions and philosophies’ (1988:72).

It was Friedrich Schlegel, however, who did more than any other during the early part of the nineteenth century to cultivate the enduring German interest in Indian origins and to strengthen the belief that India was the *Urheimat*. Schlegel had travelled to Paris in 1802 to study Persian under Antoine-Leonard de Chézy (1773–1832) and by chance he met Alexander Hamilton (1762–1824), an employee of the East India Company, who started to teach him Sanskrit. Schlegel, who had been encouraged to take up the study of Sanskrit by Majer (Willson 1964:96) and Herder (Hayes 1927:732), proved to be a keen student and quickly began to translate Sanskrit texts into German. While in Paris he began work on his most well known work *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (‘The Speech and Wisdom of the Indians’; 1808) which set out to establish for a German audience the beauty, perfection, and antiquity of Sanskrit as well

as the notion that, as Martin Thom observes, it ‘might supply the German language, conceived in Tacitean terms as itself ancient and separate and pure, with ancestral titles’ (1995:221). It was in the first part of the *Über die Sprache* that he sought, by analysing grammatical structures, conjugations, and declensions, to argue that India was the cradle of humanity and that Sanskrit was the source of all the Indo-European languages.

As I suggested in Chapter 3, it was common amongst philologists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century to argue that a language’s structural regularity and the extent of its vocabulary provided clues to its age. Sanskrit’s sophistication on both fronts, in keeping with the deist and romantic belief in the degenerative nature of cultural forms from an original state of perfection and thus divine origin, suggested for romantic linguists like Schlegel that it was likely that Sanskrit was the oldest language. From here it was an easy step to see Sanskrit as the source of German and the other Indo-European languages because they, like Sanskrit, were inflected. Schlegel contrasted languages like Hebrew or Chinese to the inflected languages suggesting that they were instead agglutinative by means of affixes joined to the roots (1977:33, 44ff., 48, 50ff.). He then deployed a further subdivision of languages into synthetic and analytic forms, suggesting that Sanskrit was a synthetic language because it could produce modifications of meaning by inflection alone, without having to resort to the use of repositions, affixes and suffixes in the way that analytic, agglutinative languages did (Thom 1995:223; Figuiera 2000:29–30). Inflection in language was a mark of a refined intelligence, one that displayed the marks of divine origin, and Schlegel used this feature to suggest the perfection of the origin:

The structure of language...is but one proof added in confirmation of so many others, that the primitive condition of mankind was not one of mere animal instinct, which by slow degrees, and with many a weary effort, at length attained some slight glimmering of reason and intelligence; it rather confirms...that...the most profound study and the clearest intelligence were early called into operation, for without such labour and reflection it would have been impossible to frame a language like the Indian, which...displays the entire ground plan of the consciousness.

(1849:454)

Schlegel ranked agglutinative languages in a lower order, and having established a principle of hierarchy, he was then able to arrange the Indo-European languages on a descending scale where Greek, Latin, and the Romance languages proceeded out of Sanskrit as the *Ursprache*, each marking a progressive erosion or degeneration of the original (1808:425; see Thom 1995:223). Using what should by now

be a familiar botanical analogy,⁵ Schlegel argued that the nominal and verbal forms of inflected languages stemmed from a linguistic root in the same way that a stem, branches, and leaves develop from a plant's root (1977:41–59, 65–70). Because of inflection, Schlegel saw Sanskrit and its derivative languages as living organisms, capable of penetrating intelligence (1977:68–69) whereas agglutinative languages resembled mere agglomerations of atoms (1977:51).

It is important to note that in postulating the division of language types into these two forms, in common with many other comparative philologists, Schlegel subtly realigned linguistic studies away from a preoccupation with the monogenesis of the human races built on biblical assumptions towards an acceptance of polygenetic origins. This should not be mistaken, however, as a proto-postmodern celebration of plurality; rather, it represents yet one more attempt to free the Indo-European languages from any affiliation with Hebrew. As Dorothy Figueira suggests, 'The divine status [Schlegel] accorded to inflected Sanskrit necessitated a less than divine origin for what he perceived as the agglutinative languages' (2002:30). After Schlegel, the Germans were free to focus on producing monogenetic accounts of their own origin, however much such accounts depended on an assumption of polygenesis, and it was here that nineteenth-century racial science and romantic linguistics began to coalesce.

In his *Über die Sprache* Schlegel initially set out to offer a 'Romantic manifesto on India' (Figueira 2002:29), believing as he did that the particularly European articulation of religion, mythology, and poetry originated in India. For him, ancient Indian culture as revealed in its texts and language exhibited a pure, undiluted form of what, in Christian Europe, was a barely discernible trace of a natural and original fusion of philosophy and poetry. In other words, he initially believed, based on his linguistic theories, that the ancient Indians had achieved the romantic dream: the synthesis of philosophy and poetry, of mind and spirit.⁶ However, the leap that he wished to make from the purity and complexity of Sanskrit linguistic forms to a corollary purity in religio-philosophical forms proved difficult. His increasing familiarity with Indian sources, and the recognition there of something approaching polytheism, which, under deist influence, he viewed negatively, soon convinced him that India too had succumbed to the degeneration of religion and philosophy. As Figueira argues, Schlegel's 'larger plan

⁵ Thom suggests that these botanical inferences were intended and that they 'suggest debts both to Herder or Schelling and, in Paris, to Cuvier' (1995:223).

⁶ Such a view seems to have drawn some inspiration from Majer's own theories on the mythology of Sanskrit India. See Willson 1964:96–104.

was to salvage the palatable aspects of the Divine from his abortive Indic studies. He projected onto Sanskrit what he could not find in Indian philosophy and religion' (2002:30). Having approached India in search of unity and original revelation, Schlegel thus came away only with erroneous linguistic theories that nonetheless allowed him to transform Herder's depiction of India as the cradle of humanity into the *Urheimat* of his own language and *Volk*. He became increasingly disillusioned with his study of India and Sanskrit, and it is arguable that this may have contributed to his conversion to Catholicism in 1808.

However, despite his disappointment with India, he still believed that remnants of the primordial religion were to be found there and that the most profound revelation of the human spirit could be attained through a synthesis of the intellectual cultures of India and Europe (Willson 1964:93). Friedrich Schlegel's work proved influential on, or at least was reflected in, the work of a number of important German scholars of the early nineteenth century, particularly his brother August Wilhelm Schlegel, who became the first professor of Sanskrit in Germany in 1818, Joseph Görres (1776–1848), Georg Friedrich Creuzer (1771–1858), and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, who also contributed to the idealisation of India (see Willson 1964:106–110; Figueira 2002:31–33) who in turn cultivated Sanskrit philology and the study of Indian mythology within the German universities. By the end of the nineteenth century, Germany had more experts in the field of Indology and Sanskrit studies than any other European nation, a fact that McGetchin finds puzzling in view of the fact that unlike Britain, Germany had very little direct interaction with India. He suggests however, that it was ancient rather than modern India that was of interest to German scholars but that by the 1820s serious attention to Indian material was on the wane, at least amongst the romantics (2004: 197; 204–205). What had initially been held to be a realistic hope of a homeland was turned into a mythical image that continued to sustain the German romantic dream, but it also contributed to a distancing, within Germany, from the idea of India as the *Urheimat*. The theme of cultural and religio-philosophical degeneration soon combined with racial science to shift the speculations that situated the cradle of humanity in India to either a Central Asian or European location, and Germany, though coming late to the party, as it were, had more reasons than most other nations to embrace this change.

II. The German Urheimat and the Myth of Aryan Origins

I showed in Chapter 3 how the German humanists from the fifteenth century onwards had become enamoured with Tacitus' claim that the Germans were an autochthonous race. In the latter half of the nineteenth century Tacitus was brought together with the discovery of William Jones to claim a German homeland for the Indo-Europeans but as Kristian Kristiansen has claimed, the foundation for establishing this case had been set in motion for some time before the discovery of Sanskrit and its affiliations with the European languages. Nonetheless, it was in the nineteenth century that this idea began to take on a life of its own:

The myth of indigenous barbarian origins developed in Middle Europe, especially in Germany, which regarded barbarian Europe as the original source of uncorrupted freedom...as opposed to the despotism of Classical empires. [However], with the aid of historical linguistics [from the eighteenth century onwards]...a national historical framework was constructed to legitimate the expanding German nation. Direct ethnic links were postulated between the prehistoric past and the present on the basis of ethnic explanations of archaeological cultures...It later served as a platform for racist constructions of a Germanic 'Urvolk' to serve the Nazi regime.

(1996:141)

The Nazi regime notwithstanding, however, it was in fact the scholars of the nineteenth century who began the task of conflating linguistic affiliations with racial and ethnic identity.

Max Müller was a firm advocate of the theory of racial kinship between the Europeans and the Indians and he drew on his theories of Aryan military and cultural supremacy to support Britain's colonial project and later to suggest that the German people too had much to gain from association with the Aryans. Although he himself tried to resist 'patriotic' impulses, he admitted that he would be proud to look upon 'Germany as the cradle of all Aryan life' (1888:127), and 'Teutonic speech as the fountain of all Aryan thought' (1888:154). In 1847, he presented a paper entitled 'On the relation of the Bengali to the Arian and aboriginal languages of India' to a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Oxford, which was chaired by Prichard and attended by Prince Albert, Robert Gordon Latham (1812–1888) and John Crawfurd (1783–1868), the latter two of whom were very hostile to his theories of Indo-European consanguinity as I suggested in Chapter 3. In this paper Müller proposed what Trautmann refers to as a 'two-race theory of Indian civilization' (1997:174), where India's population was composed of indigenous Cushites (or Hamites) and Caucasian Japhetites. For Müller, the northern Brahmins were descendants of the Caucasians, differing only from their European relatives in their slightly darker complexion caused

by the Indian climate, whereas the darker indigenous race who inhabited southern India and the mountainous regions of the north resembled negroes (Cushites) physically and intellectually, and spoke languages that were not Indo-European in origin but rather Dravidian, again thought to be of Cushite/Hamite origin. He suggested that early Indo-European warrior tribes—who he later argued had originated somewhere in the northern steppes, and who were the ancestors of the Greeks, Italians, Slavs, Germans, Persians, and Celts, as well as the Hindus (1899, I.63–64, 66; II.20)—had invaded northern India, and subdued the indigenous population, an achievement that was made easier by the latter’s degenerate and savage propensities:

We generally find that it is the fate of the negro race, when brought into hostile contact with the Japhetic race, to be either destroyed and annihilated, or to fall into a state of slavery and degradation, from which, if at all, it recovers by the slow process of assimilation.

(1847:348)

He argued that a process of assimilation had indeed occurred in the north of India and therefore that

The lower classes of the Hindus consist of those aboriginal inhabitants, some continuing in a state of the utmost degradation as outcastes; but others have intellectually and physically undergone a complete regeneration, so that after three thousand years it would be difficult to trace the Sudra [the structurally idealised lowest class Müller derived from his reading of the *Puruṣasūkta* hymn, *Rgveda* 10.90] origins of many highly distinguished families of India.

(*ibid.*)

Müller clearly connected the mission of colonial Britain to the early Aryans as I noted above and he further contributed to the assertion of a racial differentiation between Aryans and Semites and to the consolidation of the demotion of Hebrew from its previous status as the *Ursprache* although he was later to reject the conflation of race with language as I will discuss below.

However due to the efforts of a number of scholars, it soon became the case, as Bryant notes, that ‘An oriental origin for the Indo-Europeans was no more compatible with German agendas and aspirations than with British ones’ (2001:31). Bryant (2001:31–32) attributes the ethnologist Robert G. Latham (*fl.* 1862) with the most well-known and widely disseminated assertion that Europe was the homeland of the Indo-European race. Latham, intent on challenging Müller’s contention that the Indians and Europeans were ‘brothers’, argued that, ‘when philologies make the Veda 3000 years old, and deduce the Latin and its congeners from Asia, they are wrong to, at least, a thousand miles in space’ (1862:620). He utilised a zoological metaphor to suggest that language derivation proceeded from diversity to homogeneity rather than vice versa as the leading philologists seemed to suggest:

Where we have two branches of the same division of speech separated from each other, one of which is the larger in area and the more diversified by varieties, and the other smaller and comparatively homogeneous, the presumption is in favour of the latter being derived from the former, rather than the former from the latter. To deduce the Indo-Europeans of Europe from the Indo-Europeans of Asia, in ethnology, is like deriving the reptiles of Great Britain from those of Ireland in herpetology.

(1851:cxlii)⁷

Latham was a follower of the ethnologist James Prichard, who, as I discussed in Chapter 3, was one of the first to use the term ‘Aryan’ to refer to the racial origins of the Indo-European tribes. Prichard initially held that the original humans had been dark-skinned and that their skin had gradually become lighter due to the effects of civilisation. He shifted this position gradually towards the more commonly held view that skin complexion was due to climate, offering the proof that the inhabitants of the Himalayas had fair skin, blue eyes, and auburn hair (1843:169); he went on to oppose the fair Aryan race of Indo-European stock to the indigenous inhabitants of the subcontinent (1843:240). It was his follower Latham, along with fellow Prichardian John Crawfurd (1783–1868) who was instrumental in forcing a break with comparative philology and promoting racial science in its place. He viewed the contemporary population of India as having a Mongoloid ancestry, distinguished from the Indo-Europeans (whom he referred to as Japhetic), and that the ancient speakers of Sanskrit were therefore a race apart, further suggesting that the Sanskritic homeland had been in the Baltic region, probably the eastern or southeastern border of Lithuania (Trautmann 1997:179). Crawfurd, in an article published in 1861, disputed the account of linguistic and racial affiliation and origin promoted by comparative philologists, suggesting that these theories were based on the faulty assumption of the conformity of language to ethnicity (1961:268). However reasonable his argument seems, it should be noted that it was motivated by a concern to reject any kind of racial affinity between the British and the Indians and he concluded his paper by stating that

The theory which makes all the languages of Europe and Asia, from Bengal to the British Islands, however different in appearance, to have sprung from the same stock, and hence, all the people speaking them, black, swarthy, and fair, to be of one and the same race of man, is utterly groundless....I can by no means, then, agree with a very learned professor of Oxford [Müller] that the same blood ran in the veins of the soldiers of Alexander and Clive as in those of the Hindus whom, at the interval of two-and-twenty ages, they both scattered with the same facility.

(1861:285)

⁷ See also Bryant 2001:32 and Trautmann 1997:168–172.

Trautmann suggests that Crawford's intervention marked the beginnings of a 'doctrine of racial essentialism' and placed India at the 'centre of the growing quarrel between ethnology and philosophy or, to put it more exactly, between race science and the Sanskritists' (1997:181; 182). It also marked a shift in the models that were used to understand the development of the human race, away from the botanical metaphor (or perhaps more accurately the arboreal) of the *Stammbaum* (discussed in Chapter 3) to one that was more obviously hierarchically organised on the model of a scale of descent, an idea considerably aided by Darwinist theories of evolution after the 1860s. As Trautmann frames it, it was subsequently argued that 'the racial differences among humans had come about over a timescale vastly longer, measurable in the tens and hundreds of thousands of years, than the period in which the Indo-European languages differentiated themselves from one another and from their common ancestral language' (1997:183). Müller himself was quick to acquiesce in this idea and to distance himself from his earlier claim of a two-race theory of Indian civilization, suggesting that 'The science of language and the science of ethnology should not be mixed up. Races can change languages. Different languages can be spoken by our race and the same language by different races' (1899:450).

From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, the idea that the European peoples were not necessarily related to the Indians and that their original homeland was not located in the East gained ascendancy even in Germany, although German romantic linguists had initially clung to the idea of India as the *Urheimat* of the German peoples as I have already suggested. However, the response in Germany towards India as the original homeland and to the Indo-European hypothesis, tied as it was to an emergent nationalism and the concomitant flowering of romanticism discussed in the previous chapters, was certainly more enthusiastic and longer lasting than it was in Britain. Poliakov suggests that it was Herder, in placing the homeland in the 'primitive mountains of Asia' (1803:518), who was influential in inaugurating the German devotion to India, a claim that certainly has merit when one considers his influence on the Schlegels, the Grimms, and Fichte. Herder, in promoting his theory of the *Urheimat*, argued that the 'discovery' of the homeland indicated that Europeans—perhaps Germans in particular—could now be relieved of the necessity of having to assert any kinship with the Semitic races (1803:517–518).

The German philologist Lazarus Geiger (1829–1870) was the first to suggest that the Aryans had been a blond and blue-eyed race and that dark skin was the result of

miscegenation with non-Aryans. He drew on Tacitus to suggest that ‘The Indo-Germanic people remain unadulterated wherever pure blond traits are best preserved’ (in Bryant 2001:31). As Bryant suggests, Geiger supported his claim, again through recourse to Tacitus, on the basis that the ‘then available data showed no evidence of a pre-Indo-European linguistic stratum in north Europe, unlike other European countries’ (*ibid.*). The implication clearly had to be, therefore, that the Indo-Europeans were indigenous to Europe and, based on the prevalence of fair-skinned physical traits were further to be differentiated from their southern neighbours who were darker skinned. Armed with the data suggested by the likes of Latham and Prichard, and by Geiger, as well as with Tacitus’ suggestion of the autochthony of the ancient German people and their fair skinned and blonde appearance, Theodor Poesche (1826–1899) similarly proposed that the original Aryans had been a blonde race who had originated in northern Europe and that they had spoken Indo-German.⁸ Because Lithuanian was the oldest Indo-European language, Poesche believed that it was most likely in that region that the *Urheimat* would be found (1878). Bryant suggests that Poesche’s logic was even more simplistic than Geiger’s insofar as he

accepted without question that the original Aryans spoke Indo-European and were blond. Greeks, Italians, and French had the correct linguistic credentials but were disqualified due to being dark, while some of the Scandinavians had the right physical qualities but spoke the wrong language. The Germans won by default.
(2001:32)

Regardless of the flaws in the logic by the likes of Geiger and Poesche, their ideas were received with enthusiasm in Germany and provoked a search for more data that would confirm the status of the German people as the original Aryans. In 1886 the phrenologist Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) published the results of a large survey he had undertaken involving fifteen million schoolchildren. Titled ‘The Skin, Hair, and Eye Colour of German Schoolchildren’ it collated the results of questionnaires soliciting information about the hair and eye colour of the children attending the schools in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium. The results overall indicated a preponderance of ‘Aryan’ physical traits and for many Germans secured ‘hard scientific proof correlating the Germans with the pure blond Aryans’ (Bryant 2001:33). Many scholars working in diverse fields began to look for further confirmation of Germany’s Aryan origins and to claim that Germany was the *Urheimat*, for example the archaeologists Karl

⁸ The term ‘Indo-German’, proposed by Julius Klaproth in 1823, was the preferred German designation for ‘Indo-European’ on the grounds that Sanskrit and German ‘encapsulated the entire Indo-European-speaking area’ (Bryant 2001:20).

Penka (*fl.* 1883) and Gustav Kossina (1858-1931). While debates regarding the location of the *Urheimat* continued outside of Germany, the belief in a German homeland for the Indo-Europeans, by the end of the nineteenth century, had won widespread popular appeal within Germany and became somewhat of a settled proposition in many circles.

I will return below to consider the racial implications of this idea below, but first I want to examine briefly how the concept of a German *Urheimat* fed into the broader programme of the German search for origins and identity. Anthony Smith maintains that a collective identification with a particular territory is an essential foundation of ethnic identity (1986:28–29; 1995:56). In the previous chapter I examined the ways in which the German romantic painters and then the *Kaiserreich* territorialised the landscape, investing it with a mythical quality that tied together the imagined past and the present. The notion of a German *Urheimat* served a similar function but more securely connected the people to the land and was further able to legitimise not only the commonality of the Germans but also their ancient pedigree granting them a status akin to that of a chosen, or at the very least, a providential people. They could now undertake a form of mythmaking that suggested that it had been the German people who had bequeathed the world the wonders of Indo-European civilisation and that they were divinely ordained to rescue Europe from degeneration. As Olender suggests, ‘From the old “Aryan myth” devoted to the romantic quest for a paradise lost, a programmatic vision of the future of [Europe could] be derived’ (1994:23) and as such this myth constituted a concept of ethnic election.

Anthony Smith has argued that ‘Myths of ethnic chosenness not only underpin peoples and cultures; they also provide charters and title deeds of sacred homelands’ (Smith 1992:450). In a similar vein, Cauthen suggests that such a view of a homeland ‘consecrates’ the land insofar as it ‘encompasses the terrain on which heroic ethnic forebears led the community in the collective realization of its providential destiny and contains the soil in which they now rest’ (2004:24–25). The *Urheimat* was thus one more means of asserting the continuity of the German people and the contiguity between them and their land but it also served to create a means to assert the distinctiveness of the German race and to provoke the necessity of excluding others who did not match the Aryan type for fear of miscegenation that would corrupt the pure blood of the original race.

Penrose suggests four main dimensions of territoriality, the character of which I discussed briefly in the previous chapter, that enabled the separation and inclusion of

people within a national homeland. Firstly, 'territories are often conceptualised and promoted as "natural" divisions of the earth's surface' which are reinforced by the physical terrain of a territory or through the act of 'naming a territory and demonstrating its longevity—sometimes through reference to origins in "time immemorial"—that people are convinced of its "naturalness"' (2002:280–281; see also Smith 1999b). Secondly, and by implication, 'the relationships between specific groups of human beings and the territories that sustain them are also conceptualised as "natural"....Thus, kinship ties are commonly viewed as stronger than any other connections between people, and bonds to homelands are cemented through processes of birth and nurturing over time' (2002:281). Thirdly,

the emotional power of territory stems from the fact that the vast majority of people have direct and personal experience of attachment to particular places....[W]hen individuals have personal experiences of geographical attachments, this makes it very easy for them to extend the same sentiments to others over both time and space. Through this process, personal experiences of territorial attachment give rise to the assumption that such bonds have a "natural universality". This in turn makes it relatively easy to downplay the exclusionary power of territories because it becomes incomprehensible that anyone would want to live where they do not belong.

(2002:281–282)

Finally, this emotional aspect of territoriality is reflected in the propensity of people to reinforce their relationship to particular places through recourse to history, memory, and myth. As such, Penrose suggests that

Every society has stories about its origins and past [which] reflect the uniqueness of the society and this distinctiveness is reinforced through the language of communication and through religious and/or historical allusions. Moreover, these stories always occur in space and are usually associated with specific sites and/or landscapes.

(2002:282)

The concept of a German *Urheimat* notion was one such story—a myth forged by other myths—and it served to reinforce yet another myth: that of the Germans as the *Urvolk*, the original people. As the original people it was one short step for many Germans to see themselves as a 'chosen' or 'elect' people on the model of the ancient Israelites and this was an idea that became consolidated in the *Sonderweg* ('special path') doctrine.⁹ Cauthen has suggested that 'myths' of ethnic election (although I would prefer the term 'discourses' because that is how they function)¹⁰ when mixed with nationalist ideologies 'morally elevates the members of the nation above those who are not part of the ethno-

⁹ See Kocka 1988 for an informative discussion of the *Sonderweg* doctrine and the various debates around it.

¹⁰ See my discussion of discursive practices as defined by Foucault in the Introduction.

national community' (2004:26). Nationalism when inflected with a belief in ethnic destiny therefore establishes, according to Cauthen, socio-cultural criteria which distinguish members of the nation from non-members in the demarcation of an exclusive ethno-national boundary (*ibid.*; see also Smith 1999a:334-9). Against the background of the growth of cultural nationalism that continued to assert its claims to the essential unity of the German people in spite of the *Kleindeutsch* solution of the *Kaiserreich*, and together with the more broadly European effort to sever ties with any Semitic provenance through recourse to Indo-European origins (see Chapter 3 above), the doctrine of the *Urheimat* certainly coincided with, and was probably productive, of a discourse of differentiation between Aryan Germans and Semitic Jews. This discourse, however, served as the condition of possibility for the assertion of a distinct German Aryan identity, an aspect that suggests that even the idea of a secure origin—whether the *Urheimat*, *Ursprache*, or *Urvolk* tied together as a myth of election—did not suffice to legitimise this identity. It had to be performed iteratively and it did so by manufacturing an image of feminised Jewishness as a threat to the purity of the *Volk*.

In what follows I want to examine how particular images—myths—of Jewishness as degenerate, corrupt, and parasitical was juxtaposed against the myth of Aryan origins. In the next section I will examine the forms of anti-Semitism that emerged throughout the nineteenth century but which took a particularly ominous form when combined with the doctrine of the pure origins of the Aryan race.

III. German Aryanism and Antisemitism as a Discourse of Differentiation

Sheldon Pollock (1993) has argued that nineteenth-century German Indology (in particular) was a form of 'inverse orientalism' insofar it 'has to be seen as vectored not outward to the Orient but inward to Europe itself, to constructing the conception of a historical human essence and to defining Germany's place in Europe's destiny' (1993:83; see also Moore 2003). It was not of course only Indology that could be described in this way; the entire field of German studies that adopted the assumptions of the romantic nationalists could equally be seen to be directed inwards, securing the superior pedigree of the German people at the expense of a series of 'others', whether they were other Europeans or German Jews. Pollock thus recalls that 'The principal German cultural dichotomy in the early nineteenth century had juxtaposed Germania and Rome' (and one could also add, France). However, in the course of the century, this dichotomy

came to be replaced by the antithesis and finally essentialized dichotomy between 'Indo-German' and 'Semite'. Indo-German...was largely a *Kontrastbegriff* ['a

discourse of contrasts'], called into being by the social and economic emancipation of the Jews in the course of the century. But what made it possible to construct and consolidate this dichotomy, in addition to an 'orientalizing' epistemology, was 'oriental' knowledge itself.

(1993:82)

I will return to the issue of the Jewish emancipation shortly. First, however, I want to suggest that the two-race model (of Semites and Aryans) promoted by Müller proved to be influential in forging a contrastive doctrine of Aryan purity and consolidated the rejection of Jewish traditions and culture that had begun with William Jones' discovery.

Müller depicted Jewish people as deficient historically in several respects, taking for granted the disaffiliation between the Semitic and Japhetic (Aryan) races. He described their poetry, scientific inquiry, political thought, and philosophical originality to be defective, and attributed the cause of this deficiency to be an excessive introversion:

We look in vain among their poets for excellence in epic and dramatic composition. Painting and plastic arts never more than at the decorative stage. Politics patriarchal and despotic, and their inability to organize on a large scale has deprived them of the means of military success. Perhaps the most general feature of their character is a negative one—their inability to perceive the general and abstract whether in thought, language, poetry or politics; and, on the other hand, a strong attraction towards the individual and personal, which makes them monotheistic in religion, lyrical in poetry, monarchical in politics, abrupt in style and useless for speculation.

(1895: 1.339)¹¹

Müller thus sought to dismantle any possible Jewish pretensions to superiority but his description of their manifold weaknesses sounds uncannily like the image of the Germans popularly held throughout Europe, as I have shown, and internalized by many Germans as they sought to assert an identity against this typology. As in the case of the elision of biblical ethnology I discussed in Chapter 3, the displacement of the Jews served as a prerequisite for the legitimization of the German Aryans but it in fact replicated and appropriated the very 'Semitic' model of history, religion, and culture, derived from biblical ethnology to secure its claims. Olender draws attention to this elision when he suggests the story of the separate origins of the Aryans and Semites were in fact 'the culmination of a historiographical effort aiming to discover for itself splendid ancestors in an East purged of all Semitism; they favoured the idea of a West superior to all other civilisations, but were nonetheless able to identify themselves with

¹¹ While Müller later decried the association of the division between the Semitic and Indo-European languages with racial taxonomies (1869–1876, IV:103–27; 1888:89–90, 108, 120)—a division, it should be remembered, he played an influential role in promoting—according to Figuiera, he 'spoke too little and too late' (2002:44).

the actors of a providential history whose rules were decreed, once and for all, by biblical revelation (1994:22). The very use of the term 'Semite' (and the association of the Aryans with Japheth) recalled the post-Babelian dispersal and the belief that the human races descended from the sons of Noah. Thus, invoking a separation between Semites and Aryans in order to disassociate European culture from any Semitic provenance could only do so by recalling that very provenance. Towards the end of this section I will return to examine the paradoxical form of identification that constituted the differential discourse of Aryan and Semite. In the meantime, I want now to discuss the context in which anti-Semitism developed in nineteenth-century Germany and the various forms it took.

As the history of the Indo-European hypothesis suggests, anti-Semitism was, at the very least, a latent force in driving the scholarship in the field. However, a more overt form of anti-Semitism in nineteenth-century Germany seems to have first erupted, in the context of the Napoleonic Wars. The imposition of the Napoleonic Code in the territories occupied by the French armies resulted in laws that 'emancipated' the Jews, first in Baden (1807–1809), Württemberg (1807–1811) and Westphalia (1808), and then in Frankfurt (1811), and Bavaria (1813) (Pasto 1998:453). These in turn led to the Prussian Edict of Emancipation around 1812 which abolished the autonomous status of the Jews and required them not only use to German in their legal transactions, but also to adopt German names. The reward for the Jews that complied with the law was to be citizenship with all the rights and equality that attended, and it was a reward that was presented as a form of 'regeneration' for the Jews, a way of forcing them to give up their distinct but 'degenerate' identity and to assimilate into German culture and to align themselves with the emergent patriotism of the first few decades of the nineteenth century. Thus, as Pasto points out, 'Despite these laws...only those Jews who showed signs of regeneration were allowed to assume hitherto forbidden occupations, which in most cases meant converting to Christianity' (*ibid.*). After the defeat of Napoleon at Jena, many states rescinded the laws and what became known as the 'Jewish question', which essentially concerned how to manage the Jewish communities within the framework of a unified nation state, began to be debated.

The status of the Jews had in fact long been a topic of debate in Germany, particularly amongst biblical scholars (see Pasto 1998:439–449; Robertson 1999:45–54), but prior to the nation-building efforts that emerged in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, the Jews in German had lived in relatively autonomous and self-determining

communities, treated as single units by the authorities for the purposes of taxation and legislation (see Carlebach 1978:12–17; see also Carlebach 1972:21–45; Pulzer 1992; Sorokin 1987). There was a fairly free amount of interaction between the Jews and Christians during this period but the Christians tended to view the Jews as a foreign and ‘eastern’ population, ‘essentially in opposition to Christianity and in divinely mandated exile from their ancient homeland in the East’ (Pasto 1998:450). To some degree this was a view that was also shared by the Jews themselves (see Robertson 1999:54–64). However, the growing nationalist movements throughout the German territories with their ideology of cultural unity began to designate the Jewish communities as a ‘state within a state’ and this characterisation played into ‘the Jewish question’. Sorokin suggests that the administrators and intellectuals of the German Confederation viewed the Jews and Judaism as ‘corrupt and debased’ (1987) embodied in their ‘superstitious’ religious customs, their occupational involvement in trade and commerce, and their apparent hostility towards Christians. As Pasto puts it,

The Jewish Question...became a series of questions concerning the capacity of Jews to participate in the state. Would the emancipation of degenerate Jews cause the decline of the wiser society? What was the cause of Jewish degeneration? Was it due to something essential to Judaism—its oriental nature? Talmudic customs? Or was it the result of centuries of Christian persecution? How could Jews become farmers if they were predisposed to commerce? How could Jews become soldiers if they could not fight on the Sabbath? Did the Talmud preach hatred of non-Jews and disdain of non-Jewish authorities? Was the Talmudic interpretation of the Mosaic Law a misunderstanding of those laws? And what was the basis of the Rabbinical leadership who were so resistant to assimilation (that is, Germanization and Protestantization)?

(1998:450)

Many different answers were offered to these questions but the most popular conclusion was that the Jews would have to exchange their autonomy for ‘regeneration’ and assimilation, transforming their religious practices in line with German Protestantism and transferring their loyalties to the state.

The ‘Jewish Question’ itself was a microcosmic representation of the concerns of the nascent nationalist movement as described above in Chapter 4. As Pasto’s list of subsidiary questions indicates, anxieties about the possibility of the renewal and purity of the German people, the necessity of resisting modernisation that occupations like trade and commerce represented, the importance of maintaining and nurturing a relationship to the land (through farming and other rural pursuits as practiced by the common folk), love of and defence of the fatherland against foreign intruders, shared traditions and religious history, and a willingness to take part in the nation building effort, all mirrored the preoccupations of the romantic nationalists. The Jewish Question

thus appeared to be a projection on to the Jews of the efforts of the nationalists to define the constitution of cultural unity. The debate continued for most of the century with sympathisers and detractors equally involved.

When the Jewish Question was combined with the myth of Aryan origins, however, a more virulent form of anti-Semitism emerged, one that was altogether more definitive in its portrayal of the Jews as the 'enemy within' and as a threat to the purity of the *Volk*. As Figueira suggests,

The myth of the Aryan was fundamentally Manichaeic. Borrowing from the social Darwinists the vision of humanity in a constant struggle for survival, the Aryan myth explained the world in terms of a relentless combat between the forces of good and evil. The Aryan was solidly identified with everything good. Goodness was defined in terms of its necessary correlative, evil, which increasingly became identified with the Jew. What was needed to complete this vicious equation were theorists who would amalgamate the myths of Aryan superiority and cultural decay with anti-Semitism.

(2002:67)

One such theorist was Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau (1816–1882) leading John Day to suggest that 'France has been called "the homeland of racial" theory' (1994:15). However, Gobineau's racist theories concerning the Jews in particular were not well-received in France and he found a much more receptive audience in Germany, where numerous societies were named after him (Bryant 2001:33).

Gobineau wrote the four-volume *Essai sur l'inégalité de races humaines* ('An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races'; 1853–1855) as means of explaining the superiority of the white Aryan race. He suggested that they had inaugurated civilisation but had degenerated when their blood became diluted through mixing with other races. Gobineau held that the Germans represented the purest type of Aryan, which was, Figueira suggests, 'an assessment that contributed significantly to his early and warm reception in Germany' (2002:67). He established his arguments by analogy with organic growth and decay, and transferred this idea to an analysis of society and the ethnic communities of the world. Unlike other intellectuals who were also concerned with the dangers of 'degeneration', Gobineau did not attribute its cause to climate, over-indulgence, or endemic weakness. Instead, basing his arguments on the biblical story of the descent of humankind from the three sons of Noah, he suggested that the human races had been created by God as pure and noble but because of centuries of interbreeding all the races had become contaminated. He argued that a race degenerated when the blood of its ancestors no longer flowed in its veins, in the process becoming irretrievably lost (1966:162–163), contending that it was Aryan history that offered a case

study of how a once noble race had succumbed to this kind of degeneration, exemplified by the Europe of his day.

Gobineau divided the human races according to male and female characteristics. Among the 'female' nations, he classified the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and the Indian and designated the Chinese, ancient Romans, and the Germans as races of the male type. He further divided them into three different colours: yellow, black, and white, each with their own physical and psychical traits and dispositions. He believed that the yellow race tended towards pragmatism and mediocrity, but also had an affinity and respect for tradition. Gobineau characterised the black race in terms of animal appetites, a propensity to give in to their senses, and as fundamentally unstable. He suggested that they were intellectually inept, phlegmatic, and destined to perpetual servitude (1966:507). Predictably, he considered the white race to be the most superior of the three, functioning as what he referred to as the *race civilisatrice*, powerfully intelligent, driven towards freedom, strong, honourable, and so on (1966:342, 347). The black race could improve itself, however, by mixing with other races, gradually developing intelligence, imagination, and an artistic temperament (1966:474–76). In fact, for Gobineau culture as a whole could only evolve through controlled miscegenation but that excessive mixing would lead to degeneration.

In line with the biblical motif he employed, the black race was descended from Ham, sent to Africa as a result of Noah's curse (Gen. 9:25). The descendants of Shem had originally started out white but had degenerated through intermixing and had become akin to a Negroid race. Gobineau conventionally aligned Japheth's descendants with the Aryans. One branch of the Aryans migrated to Iran and India but had been corrupted through mixing with the aboriginal (black) inhabitants and Gobineau presented India's racial situation as a warning to all nations. (1966:557). Another branch settled in southern Europe founding the Greek and the Roman civilisations. However, they too intermarried with degenerate Mediterranean Semites and were corrupted by the yellow races through Alexander's imperial expansions so that black blood from the west and south, and yellow blood from the east and west had led to their own degeneration and led to the collapse of their civilizations. For Gobineau, the German Aryans were *Göttersöhne* ('God's son's'); they incarnated all that was pure, noble, and fruitful (1966:479) and here his vision of the Aryans was clearly more inclined towards the 'Indo-Germanic' rather than the Indo-European hypothesis. He, like many of his contemporaries, believed that the original Aryans were white-skinned, blond, and blue-

eyed (1966:485) and that it was the Germans, more than any other branch of the race who had maintained their racial purity. As such, they had nothing in common with their Indian, Iranian, or southern European 'brothers', all of whom who had long since 'detached' themselves from the moral values of original Aryans whose blood still remained within the northern European nations (1966:481).¹² Gobineau viewed the northern Europeans, and particularly the Germans, as the last remaining, virtually pure, white race, suggesting that it was their duty to save humanity. Were they to fail to maintain their purity and to extend the benefits of their culture to the rest of the world then civilisation would disappear completely and he concluded his essay by warning that the Germans were in danger themselves of falling prey to the 'Asian, Mongolian, and Slavic hordes', an event that would signal not only the end of the civilised world but also the twilight of the gods (1966:1161–1166).

Figueira suggests that 'Gobineau had set the standard for the popular historical genre subsequently adopted by cultural critics to prognosticate the decline of civilization. Masked by a veneer of scholarly respectability, the literature of degeneration fed on society's fears of cultural decay' (2002:73–74). Certainly, those who followed his theories within Germany developed a similar vision of the purity of the Aryans and the necessity of guarding against contamination, none more so than the British Germanophile and son-in-law of Richard Wagner (1813–1883),¹³ Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855–1927). In his *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* ('The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century'; 1899), Chamberlain sought to provide a bio-anthropological basis for racial theorising and Figueira points out that 'his...theories made him so famous in his adopted country that he was popularly known as the Kaiser's anthropologist' (2002:74). Gobineau divided humanity into two races of distinct physical stature and mental and moral dispositions, the Aryans and the Semites. He

¹² However, as Figueira suggests, Gobineau was 'capricious' insofar as 'he shifted the designation of the purest Aryan to suit his needs. At times, he found its purest strain in English blood. On other occasions, he discovered it in Scandinavia. In other words, when Gobineau spoke of purity, he did not mean it in any absolute sense. The deadly germ of race mixture, 'le fond corrompteur', pursued all peoples. The Germanic Aryans, like all other peoples, would also eventually succumb. This key principle of Gobineau's thought was curiously ignored by his German nationalist disciples' (2002:69).

¹³ For reasons of space I am not going to discuss the efforts of Wagner to popularise Germanic mythology through his monumental operas nor his well-known anti-Semitic attitudes, particularly given that there is already a good deal of literature that tackles this. For a useful overview in keeping with the material presented in this thesis see Williamson 2004:180–210. I am also not going to examine Nietzsche's complex writings on myth, Aryanism, anti-Semitism, the 'blond beast' and so on for similar reasons. See instead Williamson 2004:234–283; Lincoln 1999:101–120; Grottanelli 1997.

considered the struggle between these two races to be the driving force of history where their development and degeneration in each age defined a dominant human type. However, the main purpose of the *Grundlagen* was to demonstrate that the Germanic people had been the main force behind philosophy, law, and the figure of Christ. He charted their progress up to the nineteenth century showing that their ancient greatness had been perverted by the fall of Rome which he suggested was the pivotal moment in history when the Aryan race and its providential mission began to unravel. He laid the blame firmly at the door of racial miscegenation and the pernicious efforts of the Jews. He further argued that Catholic Church had continually pandered to the Papacy and the needs of a degenerate population under the sway of Semitic influences, to the extent that true Christianity no longer truly existed. In Chamberlain's estimation, it was Teutonic mission to undo this chaos by rescuing Christianity, expunging it of Semitic elements, and sifting out the original revelation of Christ. The way of achieving this was to seek out the original divine understanding of the ancient Aryans, now only partially retrievable within Indian sacred texts and of acknowledging Germany's racial and spiritual affinity with them. Chamberlain thus sought to (re)construct a notion of the Aryan based on 'scientific' fact, but acknowledged that this process ran the risk of inventing an Aryan figure in the image of its maker (1968, I:265). He criticised Gobineau for drawing upon biblical chronology suggesting that it weakened what Chamberlain thought was his otherwise rigorous scholarship, reducing it to 'scientific phantasmagoria' (1968, II:206). He also disagreed with Gobineau's assertion that even the noble white race had degenerated arguing instead that the pure races had developed like trees, gradually becoming more majestic with the ability to renew themselves (1968, I:263). Nonetheless, where he did agree with Gobineau was in his suggestion that racial decline was due to racial miscegenation; he differed however in that he placed the sole blame on the Semitic race, most particularly the Jews (1968, I:262).

Chamberlain established his claims initially through recourse to physiology, suggesting that it was by careful study of physical traits that an individual's race could be determined. As far as he was concerned, Aryans shared certain physiognomic characteristics—skin colour, dolichocephalic skulls, light coloured hair, blue eye colour, and strong musculature (1968, I:437, 577, 575, 580). They only differed from each other significantly to the extent that they had mixed with other races. As a whole, however, according to Figueira, Chamberlain was more interested in 'revealing the spiritual characteristics of this superior race' and that the physiological indicators of race 'had to

be complemented by spiritual traits. Inner depth, loyalty to a master that one has freely chosen, and intellectual freedom were characteristics he discovered in the Teuton/Aryan' (2002:76). Thus where physiognomic analyses might only provide subtle hints about the race of a group or individual, spiritual indicators such as religious orientation, political ideologies, folk poetry, and idealism combined with a strongly pragmatic sensibility, a pleasure in freedom and so on, could prove or disprove Aryan ancestry more solidly (1968, I:592, 320. 94). As such, Chamberlain shifted the criteria for Aryan identity from the linguistic and physical registers to a moral and spiritual plane. For all his touted scientism, he ultimately relied on that old romantic staple, intuition. As far as he was concerned the indicators of Aryanhood could be found amongst his contemporary Germans Aryans insofar as they were able to strike a balance between individual and public freedom and combined autonomy with a deep sense of 'Teutonic' fraternal loyalty (1968: I:866, 543–544). Figuiera points out that Chamberlain's idealisation of modern Germans was clearly influenced by Tacitus' *Germania* (2002:76). However, unlike the ancient autochthonous and pure Germans as depicted by Tacitus Chamberlain's Germans had been infiltrated by foreign elements and the noble patrimony of their race was in danger of being decimated by 'mongrel races and Jews' (1968, I:494). Moreover, in a striking echo of Jakob Grimm's arguments in the *DM*, he believed that the ancient Germanic Aryan religion had been corrupted by the Roman Catholic Church itself having fallen prey to Semitic superstition and its obsession with sin and divine retribution. Nonetheless the German race had struggled to preserve their religion during the Reformation and to expel Latinised and Semitic elements, waging a continuous though not altogether successful battle against the forces of Rome and the Jews. The result was what Chamberlain referred to as *Völkerchaos*, 'robbing areas of influence of pure blood and unbroken vigor and depriving them of the rule of those with the highest talent' (1968, I:494).

In contrast to the German Aryans, it is unsurprising that Chamberlain portrayed the Jews as violent, fanatical, and intolerant (1968, I:404). Aryan religious literature, by far the greatest in the world (1968, I:402), differed from whimsical and egotistical Hebrew scripture (1968: 1.402). Moreover, the philosophy such as the Jews possessed had been stolen from the Aryans (1968, I:403), in the same way that every other achievement they called their own had been stolen (1968, I:401). In comparison with the humane and gentle Aryan, Jews were callous and sharp-witted. Compared to the tender sympathetic, and pious Aryan (1968: 1.434), the Jew was hard-hearted and stunted in his

spiritual development (1968: 1.213). Chamberlain drew heavily on the Sanskrit *Ṛg Veda* to draw a portrait of Aryan religion in order to compare it to the superstitious, craven religiosity of the Jews (1968, I, 215–216, 242). Moreover, according to Chamberlain, the Aryans had invented the monotheism in the *Ṛg Veda* which the Jews had subsequently stolen. He went so far as to claim that it was the *Ṛg Veda* that was the true source of Christianity rather than the Hebrew scriptures (1968, II:412–413). He portrayed Jesus as an Aryan because the idea that he was in fact a Jew was, for Chamberlain, preposterous largely in view of the fact that the Jews had no capacity for religious innovation or thought (1968, I:256). More significantly, however, Christ had the character of an Aryan to the extent that his teaching expressed Aryan rather than Jewish values. He was thus the ‘God of the young Indo-European peoples’ (1968, I:245) and God’s representative of the Germanic soul (1968, I:893). Despiciously, the Jews, ‘men of chaos’ had distorted these Aryan elements and passed them to Christianity in their present corrupted form (1968, II:23–27, 109–110), making of Christianity a mere appendage to Judaism (1968, I:417). As Figueira points out, Chamberlain’s treatment of the *Ṛg Veda* was the result of a very ‘creative and unsubstantiated reading’ enabling him to construct ‘the history of the Aryan people’ in such a way that ‘allowed him to argue that the Jew was the purveyor of materialism, intolerance, and social dissolution as well as the destroyer of civilization’ (2002:80). Furthermore, his selective and superficial interpretation of Indian texts enabled him to create a Manichaean image of the idealistic, antimaterialist, active, valiant, and serious Aryan and a corrupt, effeminate, crafty, thieving, and unoriginal Jew and to spur his contemporaries to retrieve their glorious heritage from the utterly alien hands of the benighted Jews.

Chamberlain’s representation of the Aryans and Semites, while extreme, was certainly not unique in the latter half of the nineteenth century and in many ways he brought to fruition the process that had begun with Jones and Herder, of detaching Europeans (or at least the Germans) from any dependence on a Semitic provenance. Some comment, however, is required about the reason for the extremism in the division between Aryans and Semites. As far as I can see, part of the problem was with the doctrine of assimilation that was promoted for German Jews. As Moore suggests ‘there was a marked tendency in the...anti-Semitism of the late nineteenth century to insist upon the Oriental heritage of the Jewish race, to remind Jews of their non-European origins, especially once Western nations came face to face with the foreign manners and dress of migrating East European Jews’ (2003:27). At the same time, the interest in the

connections between the German Aryans and the Indo-Aryans lead to schizophrenic attempts to exclude the Jews from having any share in the ancient wisdom of the East by arguing that their religious and cultural heritage was utterly alien to the idealism of the Orient, as represented in the work of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906) and Philipp Mainländer (1841–1876).¹⁴ This paradoxical attitude towards the Jews was itself part of another confessional divide between those like Chamberlain who wanted to retrieve a Germanic form of Christianity and those like the aforementioned who sought Germanic religion in the traditions of India. However, both required the total exclusion of Jewish influence, and by implication, the Jewish people. Both were also tied up with a discourse concerned to preserve the purity of the German Aryan race.

Another aspect that led to the extreme anti-Semitism of the latter half of the nineteenth century, touched on by Moore and also intertwined with the issue of assimilation, was the difference between ‘assimilated’ Jews and the new arrivals from Eastern Europe. As Boa and Palfreyman observe,

Anti-Semitism served at once to sustain German identity by providing the antagonistic figure of the alien, non-German other, but also to fuel anxiety of dilution of identity through infiltration: if the eastern Jew in caricature represented a radically different, alien being, almost more laden with hatred was the stereotype of the assimilated western Jew who was identified with international capitalism and portrayed as a mimic who could never become a true German but who, without roots in a *Heimat* [‘homeland’] or a national identity of his own, might infiltrate and undermine German identity. These two figures fulfilled different roles in the reactionary version of [nationalist] discourse in that Jews could be portrayed both as an archaically demonic threat and as the very acme of a rootlessly cosmopolitan modernity which threatened to destroy traditional communal values

(2000:7)

As such, what is clear is that images of the Jewish people were essentially a social construct, and imaginative exercise (with the qualities of a nightmare) in asserting German identity through the invention of a threatening other. As I will discuss in detail the following chapter and then throughout the remainder of the thesis, this ‘social construction of enemies’ (David Norman Smith 1996) reveals the logic of the self-same wherein the construction of a distinct and impermeable identity can only be achieved through the violent exclusion of the ‘other’—a discourse of differentiation—in order to secure the coherency and singularity of the self. However, this ‘other’ remains a spectral being, haunting the constructed self, seemingly threatening both to disrupt and strip away the armour with which the self protects itself. That this was the case with German

¹⁴ See Moore 2003:22–27.

anti-Semitism in the nineteenth century appears undeniable to me. The history of the search for German identity as I have shown consisted of a series of such exclusions—the German people were juxtaposed against the Romans, then the French, other Europeans, women, and finally, more violently than any other form of exclusion, the Jews. However, these exclusions do not, for me, express something essential about the character of the German people. Rather they point to the very human and fragile nature of identity and the ways in which the narration or construction of that identity resorts seemingly naturally to the logic of the self-same. The difficulty of remaining open and vulnerable to those things that are perceived as threatening to a core, stable, and valued sense of self or which appear to trample on the things held sacred or precious, particularly in a context of loss and upheaval, is not to be underestimated. However, as I will suggest in the following three chapters, there are other models of selfhood that are both theorisable and realisable, models that seek to avoid the exclusionary, fearful struggle that the logic of the self-same inscribes. Before I move to discuss these frameworks, however, I want to summarise the search for German identity and origins through recourse to myths (whether of origins, or of others) I have traced so far, and to suggest the ways in which I believe it inscribed a patrilineal narrative of collective selfhood.

IV. Myth, Patrilineal Origins, and the Politics of Identity

While the relationship between myths, origins, and patrilinearity will be more thoroughly theorised in the next three chapters, in this section my concern is briefly to reflect on the extent to which the characteristics of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German attitude towards myth and mythology described above indicate a particular example—but by no means the only possible one—of the connection between the positing of a singularity of origin and patrilinearity. The specific relevance of my summary here will be developed more fully in the remainder of the thesis.

In the period of German history that I have surveyed in Chapters 2–7, I have endeavoured to demonstrate that the search for Germany identity was closely bound up with myth and mythmaking, to the extent that it is often difficult to distinguish between them. I began tracing the recovery of Tacitus' *Germania* in the fifteenth century and the impact that both it and the *Annales* had on the German humanists who were seeking a weapon with which to challenge the hegemony of the papacy. Both manuscripts served to cultivate a cult of primitive German virtue in view of the fact that Tacitus praised the

autochthony of the German people, their natural nobility, and simple way of life, and further furnished them with a noble ancestor in the form of the Cheruscan chief Arminius who had inflicted the spectacular defeat of the Roman legions. I suggested that the enthusiastic response to the recovery of Tacitus within Germany was in part tied to a national sense of inadequacy and inferiority compared to the other European nations who were more easily able to establish their national pedigree by asserting Greek or Latin ancestry. Tacitus' work, as an ostensibly historical source on ancient German ethnography contributed much to ameliorating the German 'identity crisis' insofar as the *Germania* and *Annales* indicated the honourable pedigree of the German people and it was for this reason that Tacitus remained, throughout the course of the German search for origins, a primary resource. Nonetheless, in the post-Enlightenment context, French cultural imperialism, coupled with the breakdown of traditional modes of society, themselves a product of the modernising impetus of the Enlightenment, German vernacular traditions and ways of life were under threat. It was Herder who sought, more influentially than any other scholar of his time, to cultivate indigenous practices and folkways as a way of combating the cosmopolitanism that was sweeping Europe. I then examined his theories regarding the connection between the *Volk* and its myths, showing how he conceived of this relationship as an integral aspect of the character of the nation (viewed as a community of individuals bound together on the basis of their shared traditions, intimate involvement with their environment and the process of *Nationalbildung*), which in turn was again reflected in its myths and customs. Herder valorised the common folk, arguing that it was they who had preserved, virtually unchanged, the essential elements of *Völkisch* patrimony that, if they were recovered and taken up by the general populace, would restore to the population a sense of their authentic selves, alleviate the pressures of contemporary life, and retrieve their origins. I also suggested that Herder conceived of the process of cultural transmission as operating according to a patrilineal model, where fathers handed the traditions of their fathers to their sons and that this model set the tone for the romantic nationalist project that sought to recover indigenous folklore as a means of tracing the history of the German people back to their origins.

However, before I examined the efforts of the romantics in this regard, I explored the context in which Herder developed his theories, namely the broader preoccupation with origins in Europe, focused around a framework established by the biblical narrative of the sons of Noah, and which culminated in William Jones' discovery

of the affinities between Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, and other European languages. Jones' discovery had far-reaching implications, not least the idea that the people of Europe were now relieved of any necessary association with the Semitic traditions of the Bible. As such it coincided with an increasing move towards a quasi-secularism that had preceded out of the Enlightenment but it also provoked an enormous interest in the religious traditions of India in particular. Debates about the original homeland of the European people accelerated with an early consensus suggesting that it was most likely to have been India. I suggested that the identification of India as the *Urheimat* was related to the identification of the people who spoke the *Ursprache* as the Aryans and it was this idea that began to crystallise what was later to become, in the context of nineteenth-century Germany surveyed in this chapter, a virulent discourse of differentiation between the Aryan Germans and the Semitic Jews.

I then turned to look in more detail at the rise of the romantic nostalgia for origins, one that could be traced back to Herder and was further reflective of the interest in the source of the German people cultivated by Jones' discovery in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Germany. Before examining the influence of several key romantic scholars, particularly the Schlegel and Grimm brothers, who pursued their work with an explicitly nationalist agenda, I surveyed a variety of contemporary theories of nationalism in order to suggest that German romantic nationalism represented a cultural rather than a civic form, largely because of the lack of any central institutional frameworks in the German territories that were able to establish a unified nation state out of the diverse regions inhabited by the German people. I argued that the cultural model invoked a triadic structure of national rhetoric, characterised by a derogation of the present and the valorisation of the past through the retrieval of folk traditions and ancient myths redolent of the nation's golden age which had to be recalled in order to achieve an authentic and unified future. I further argued that this model was firmly embedded in a gendered discourse where women served as symbolic commodities, representing the timeless and glorious past but that they were simultaneously excluded from active participation in the nation-building effort and confined to the private domestic sphere that was regulated by a conservative model of gender roles. This led me to suggest that nationalist projects encoded a masculinist ethos that depended upon a model of patrilinearity and fraternity that secured men as both the progenitors and sons of the nation. National unity in this case was figured almost solely in terms of the bonds between men and these bonds in turn established a

relationship to territory and landscape as a masculine space. I then explored these ideas in relation to the abstract notion of synthesis promoted by the early *Frühromantik* scholars who believed that the creation of a 'new mythology', founded on the values of chivalry and medieval Christianity, would translate into an actual and realisable sense of political and cultural unity amongst the people. The stress on chivalry and the *ritterliche mythologie* of August Schlegel again relied on a motif of virile and exclusive masculinity and implicitly suggested a patrilineal model of descent, where contemporary male Germans would receive their traditions from their forefathers and translate these resources for national unity.

I next examined the somewhat differently directed work of the Grimm brothers as they developed philological methods of folklore collection in order to retrieve the voice of the common people. The issue of origins was again important in this context—folklore was seen as a fast-dying tradition but also as the only possible means of locating the authenticity of the German character. The Grimm brothers set about collecting and editing a vast store of traditional tales, proverbs, songs, and nursery rhymes that they gathered together in their multi-edition *KHM*. They claimed, and seemed to believe, that despite their editorial interventions in the collection, it reflected the authentic voice of the *Volk*. However, I queried the extent to which this was the case, noting that not all their sources were oral, and nor were many of their informants as 'rustic' as they seemed to suggest. I argued that their prioritisation of orality over written sources was a form of logocentrism, tied up with what Derrida refers to as the metaphysics of presence. I will suggest in the following chapters that logocentrism is a subset of phallogocentric discourse which itself is predicated on a patrilineal economy of inheritance and which places fathers as the non-transcendable origin, altogether eliding motherhood from the scene of identification. In my examination of the Grimms' *oeuvre* I argued that their collection and editing practices replicated the exclusionary nationalist projects, discussed above, insofar as they valorised an image of the demur, silent, and housebound woman and demonised women—step-mothers, witches, disobedient daughter—in order to promote the *KHM* as a pedagogic guide for appropriate German behaviour and values.

I then moved to look at Jakob Grimm's *DM*, a monumental work of mythology that traced in minute detail the practices, religious beliefs, and myths of the ancient pagan Germans prior to the advent of Christianity in northern Europe. The myths that Grimm retrieved drew on a rich reservoir of sources—folklore, folk customs, and

canonical manuscripts such as the *Prose Edda* and the *Nibelungenlied*—and enabled him to present a remarkably complete picture of the ancient Germans as valiant, defiant, virile, and thus resolutely masculine. He promoted their customs and beliefs as authentically German, opposing them to the artificial and alien forms of religiosity imposed by Roman Catholicism and suggested that the Reformation had signalled the triumph of the original German spirit and the distillation of the remnants of a pagan past, a suggestion that placed him against August Schlegel's own theories of the 'proper' nature of German mythology. Nonetheless, both Schlegel and Grimm produced a thoroughly patriarchal repertoire of German myth, in Schlegel's case populated with brave and manly knights and in Grimm's case dominated by the figure of the father god Wotan. As the efforts of these romantic scholars filtered down into the cultural drinking water, so to speak, a number of public monuments to the glorious German past as represented by Germania and Hermann were erected as sites of memorialisation and celebration. I suggested these symbols of Germanness themselves conveyed a patrilineal subtext, particularly in the Niederwald monument where the asexualised, Athenic figure of Germania stood clearly affiliated with the manly endeavours of the soldiers who had fought for German unity against the French and Austrians and that consequently women were either marginalised or excluded in the public idealisation of the nation, once more reflecting a public/private divide that confined women to the role of mute symbols of the nation's patrimony. I argued that these representations, along with the fraternal images of volunteer soldiers in the paintings of Kersting and Friedrich, as well as the repetitive motif of woodland and ancient oaks, provoked once more an association with male comradely bonds as constitutive of both the German character and the German nation, as well as gesturing towards the virile origins of the German people. They further enacted a form of territorialisation that conveyed a contradictory image of the German landscape as both masculine and feminine. However, symbolisations of the German territories united under the Kaiserreich on the model of the *Kleindeutsch* solution as providentially replicating the ancient German polity suppressed the divisions that lay at the heart of the nation under the rubric of the 'fatherland'.

Finally, in this chapter I have returned to the question of the *Urheimat* that I began to discuss in Chapter 3 and I have shown how the earlier idealisation of India as the source of the original people shifted to the Germany, confirming the Germans as the original Aryans in possession of a pure, and intact national pedigree. It can be argued

that this turn of events represented the culmination of the lengthy process of identification—of mythmaking—that the history I have described above represented. Along with all the other exclusionary practices that defined the attempt to retrieve an authentic German character, it was anti-Semitism that enabled, with more clarity and conviction than before, the assertion of a bellicose, masculine, and noble identity for the German people. And yet, the very fact that this image required an abjected, feminised other in the form of the Jew suggests that even with the strength of the symbol of originality, German identity was still threatened, still in question.

I stated at the beginning of this section that myth and mythmaking played a central role in the process of characterisation and identification and that it was sometimes difficult to see where mythmaking began and myth ended. I have tried to convey so far the extent to which both are forms of discursive practice, practices that, as I suggested in my introduction, place limits around what it is possible to think, know, believe, and imagine, and that they operate through modes of exclusion and through an attempt to set up a clear boundary between truth and falsity. In what follows I want to shift my focus a little to examine the ways in which the clarity of these boundaries and exclusions might be shown to be less clearcut and more porous than they appear by examining a variety of theories concerning identity construction.

CHAPTER EIGHT

NARRATIVITY, SINGULARITY, AND PATRILINEARITY IN THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

The narration of identity that I have explored in the previous chapters was both the sign and the product of a poignant and monumental struggle to define a stable, unified, and pure collective 'self' on behalf of a community of people who thought of themselves as culturally and politically embattled. The retrieval and use of myths in this context gave shape to and expressed a deep yearning for communal and individual belonging as a means of confronting and overcoming the social and political fragmentation that threatened the German territories during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in particular. As such, the German search for origins was a very human quest and, in the course of my research, one I found myself increasingly sympathetic towards. As described in the Pretext, my own life history has been marked by an uncertainty regarding my sense of self as rooted in any particular place. A question I have asked myself, and have sometimes been asked by others, is whether by coming from 'nowhere' I belong 'anywhere'; do I have a home and if so would I be able to name it, to point to it on a map? Is my sense of self consequently impoverished socially or indeed ontologically? Why do I seek to 'belong' and what is it that I want to belong to?

Perhaps in researching the German search for origins, I have been seeking an analogically reassuring narrative of selfhood for myself or, on the contrary, searching for a salutary tale that warns against the too stable construction of identity, thus confirming my own sense of fragmented identity as a source of strength and insight. The material I have explored has certainly not lent itself as a source of reassurance, but has indicated the difficulties and dangers of constituting identity as singular and rooted in a bounded place and a nostalgia for the past. My implicit concern, consequently, has been to investigate why place, self, origins, and belonging seem so often to be intertwined and inseparable and whether the connections between these elements are a necessary building block in the construction of identity under the sign of western metaphysics. The conclusion that I have reached is that they are not, and that there are other ways of keeping place, self, and belonging in play. In the final chapter I will argue that finding these can be part of an ethical project of a being towards an other, that is, of embracing

otherness as constitutive of one's self rather than something that must be overcome or excluded. To say this is not to claim a self-referentially authoritative and experiential basis for either my analysis or the conclusions that make up the following chapter; but to omit any mention of my own experiences and biography as one of the hermeneutic lenses that informs my analysis would go against the grain of what I have tried to do here, which in part is to demonstrate the subjective content of myth and mythmaking. The basis of identity-through-belonging and through narration remains something of a question for me, and the conclusions I draw are necessarily tentative.

I have suggested that the differential model upon which the German romantic and nationalist construction of identity was based throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was ethically problematic and dangerous. In these two final chapters I bring together the preceding history of the German search for origins (which used myth as both a repository and a vehicle of identity) with a theoretical reflection on, and a critique of, the exclusionary model of ontology that I believe this particular search produced. Against this model, in my final chapter, I propose an alternative framework, informed by—but also extending—poststructuralist feminist theories regarding the ethics of maternity-as-origin, one which proposes the origins of the self as multiple, ambiguous, and achieved through a dialogic model of self and other. In so doing I seek to theorise a means of avoiding the exclusionary practices of identity narration; the German case stands as but one example of a broader pattern of self-constitution within the western metaphysical tradition, a pattern that in this chapter I will argue employs a patrilineal syntax to establish its coherence and legitimacy.

Throughout this thesis I have argued that one of the main mechanisms of identity narration—myth and mythmaking—which characterised the search for and then eventual identification of a collective origin in the German case relied initially on a triadic rhetoric of cultural nationalism that elevated concepts of historic continuity and causality to the status of a communal creed. I have shown that this rhetoric enabled the presentation of German identity as singular, pure, and autonomous. In the process it encoded a patrilineal economy of inheritance where the glorious and ancient past, ostensibly retrieved through myth and heroic narratives, served as confirmation of the purity and nobility of Germanic values and traditions and was contrasted to the social fragmentation and instability of the present. Many of the public figures I have discussed, particularly in the romantic nationalist movement, hoped and worked determinedly to ensure that collective remembrance and reenactment of the past would

secure a utopian future for the German people. In light of my comments above it is worth recalling that the term 'utopia' comes from the Greek *ou-topos*, meaning 'no place'; and against the sense of accomplishment and finality that the project of German unification seemed to offer, in some significant ways, German identity remained displaced and in question throughout and beyond the period surveyed. The identification of the German people's origin as *the* original linguistic and racial community also revealed an assumption of inheritance through a male line. In relation to this point, I have also tried to show throughout that embedded in the narration of German identity was a valorisation of the German national 'self' as masculine, autochthonous, and unified, and that it was myths (as narratives) that provided the medium through which such an assertion could be made. The reason for the equation I have posited between origins, singularity, and patriliney will be explored in some detail in this chapter, and followed up in the next when I discuss the work of Jacques Lacan.

In the context of the quest for German identity, the assumption of singularity, autochthony, and masculinity secured through a patriline was not enough to create a sense of stable identity. A second means through which German identity was, as shown in the previous chapter, constructed a mythic discourse of differentiation—the myth of Aryan origins which took the form of myth-as-discourse. One of the main ways this discourse was articulated was through the assertion of an incommensurable and value-laden difference between the German people as pure and original, and the Jewish people who were represented in terms of an abjected and therefore dangerous alterity. This assertion of difference obscured, however, a series of striking resemblances between the German people and their Jewish others and as such was, I argued, a form of appropriation or absorption of the role the Jewish people were previously believed to have played in world history. As such, the construction of German identity was enabled through the construction of and then effacement of otherness where singularity and duality were placed in an awkward and seemingly contradictory relationship of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion. I reflect in more detail on this paradox of identity-formation in the following chapter.

The construction of identity through narratives of continuity and discourses of differentiation that inscribe a negative logic upon which the self can be asserted against an other is closely related to the mechanisms of its authorisation established on the basis of the relative truthfulness or otherwise of narratives of the self. The claim to speak truthfully, in effect to possess the truth and to accrue the legitimating qualities of

truthfulness to oneself, has been shown throughout the thesis so far to be the mechanism through which the authority of identity construction was secured. In the context of German romanticism, the positing of an unequivocal division between the true and the false in the context of myth as a genre of narrative aided the formulation and reconstruction of an 'authentic' German identity. As such, vernacular narratives were represented containing the essential truth of Germanness, and therefore were deemed to be self-evidently authoritative in themselves. The cosmopolitan forms of culture that emerged out of the Enlightenment and against which romanticism set itself were, by contrast, false by virtue of their novelty, their rejection of the bounded, autochthonous, and primordial community, and their elevation of individual rationality over and against kindred feeling.

Taken altogether, then, the mechanisms of identity formation that I have detailed have consisted of narratives of continuity and causality, discourses of differentiation along an axis of value-laden oppositions, and the assertion of truthfulness upon which to found the authority of identity claims. In each case I have tried to show how definitions of myths and practices of mythmaking are enabling devices for this identity work. As such they bring into question the extent to which the conventionally clear-cut distinction between myth and truth can be maintained. The truth of myth seems rather to depend on the extent to which the teller is successful in conveying the legitimacy of her or his discourse and of encouraging others to participate in its narration. In what follows in this chapter, I continue to probe the relationship between truth and myth through an analysis of the narration of identity.

In the first two sections I examine contemporary theories regarding the narrative construction of identity, particularly as developed by Paul Ricoeur. I proceed to show that while Ricoeur provides an insightful account of the narration of identity, his analysis bears a good deal of similarity to the triadic rhetoric of cultural nationalism that I introduced in Chapter 4 and used in the following chapters to understand the reconstructive efforts of German romantic nationalism. Ricoeur replicates this model to the extent that he sees towards temporality as necessarily linear and continuous, and suggests that linearity is foundational to the ways in which humans grant meaning to their sense of self. As a result there are limits, in my view, to the usefulness of his model for exploring what may in fact be the fragmentary nature of human identity that linear narration tries to cover over. Drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida and Hélène Cixous and their respective analysis of logocentrism and phallogocentrism I show how

such a model of continuity and linearity may in fact be indebted to a form of inflected and obscured patriliney. My discussion of Derrida and Cixous leads to an analysis of the paradox of subject-formation mentioned above. Each of these thinkers stresses the constructed nature of identity, opposed to a naturalised essentialism, and identifies the narrative and discursive strategies through which the self, as construed and gendered by post-Enlightenment thought, is placed in an agonistic relationship to others along a series of oppositional axes where similarity/difference, singularity/duality, inclusion/exclusion, autonomy/dependence, and self/other are set up dialectically. In contrast, the models of identity suggested by Derrida and Cixous reveal a profound degree of interdependence amongst these apparently opposed forces and enables me to analyse the ways in which the self both narrates itself and is narrated. Ricœur's stress on the singularity and linear coherency of narratable selves, while it has the merit of posing identity-formation as a dialogic process, suggests that it occurs between two already separate selves, and this is an aspect I return to challenge in the final chapter.

I. Narrativity and Identity

Narrativity has, since the 1980s, become a focus for the study of the ways in which identity is constructed and signified.¹ The notion that identity formation is bound up inextricably with narrative is now a relatively uncontroversial claim and is connected to two developments in the field of social theory. The first is the emergence of the concept of 'identity politics'² and the subsequent academic interest in the social construction of identity. The phrase 'politics of identity' has regularly been wielded to refer to the efforts of groups who have been marginalised from dominant political domains and 'normative' configurations of identity to demand a redefinition of what is normative and to challenge their exclusion from the political frameworks that operate on the assumption of normativity. Many of the liberatory projects of the second half of the twentieth century are often interpreted as expressions of the politics of identity in this vein, for example, second-wave feminism, the black civil rights movement, the gay and lesbian liberation movement, and the postcolonial resistance to western hegemony, amongst others. These movements have been influential in demonstrating the constructed nature of identity in that they have opposed the self-referential account of western modernity as universal when opposing its normative assumptions. Thus

¹ See, for example, Mitchell 1981; Bakhtin 1981, 1986; Ricœur 1981, 1984, 1985; Sarbin 1986; Bruner 1986, 1990; Bauman 1986; Nelson 1989; Britton and Pellegrini 1990.

² See Aronowitz 1992; Jean Cohen 1985.

normativity, as conventionally defined under the sign of western modernity, has been revealed against its universal claims to be a particularistic and narrow configuration, namely that of the white, male, middle-class, and western individual so beloved of the post-Enlightenment era.

Within the politics of identity, on the other hand, identity is asserted through vectors of commonality, whether along the lines of shared gender, race, class, physical ability, sexuality, or a combination thereof, and these vectors establish a foundation for solidarity and activism from which rights can be demanded. The politics of identity has thus tended to operate in terms of a conflicting relationship between demands for equality on the basis of individuals' similitude to the self of Enlightenment formulations of normativity, and demands for the recognition of the difference that operates through these vectors.³ Further, these movements have shown that the normative self has only been able to claim its normative status by devaluing, repressing, or denying other forms of identity that do not meet its exclusive criteria. However, the problem with this kind of identification is that it tends to resort to a secondary form of essentialism that views the basis of solidarity for marginalised groups to be one of essence—whether one is essentially female, or black, for example. This essence also reinscribes the very basis on which they are marginalised from the 'dominant' accounts. Hence, these liberatory movements have often performed a reversal of the devaluation of marginalised identities, transforming gendered or racialised otherness into a valorised and normativised form of identity by simultaneously derogating the normative subject of western modernity. Consequently these projects have often failed properly to challenge the normativising, universalising efforts of western modernity. As a result, the emancipatory projects that are identified within the broader rubric of identity politics have regularly reproduced a narrative of origins that bears a resemblance to that of western modernity. An example would be the authenticating role that the feminist narrative of matriarchal prehistory about the past has played in constructing a present where a positive ideal of femininity can be presented in order to challenge discourses that are seen to have denigrated women.⁴ The problems with this view of the past are manifold and have been the subject of sustained, and often impatient, critiques by

³ For a useful example see Di Stefano 1990.

⁴ See, for example, Stone 1976; Starhawk 1979; 1982, Gimbutas 1982, 1989, 1991; Eisler 1987; Lerner 1986; Christ 1987; Gadon 1989, Baring and Cashford 1991.

scholars (primarily historians, anthropologists and archaeologists) since the 1960s.⁵ The objections raised by scholars to this account and the charge of ‘misappropriation’ of their work by matriarchy proponents suggest questions about the reach of scholarship and the status of its knowledge production: in this era of ‘difference’ can there be such a thing as ‘History’ in the sense of a monolithic account of human origins and development, or should the concern be rather to promote a heterogeneity of ‘histories’? Are all accounts equally valid? If not, which criteria determine validity, who adjudicates such determinations, and on what basis? (see Leslie 2003). In addition, what role can, and should, narrative play in re-creations of the past? These are questions I will return to in the final chapter, but the point here is that the politics of identity have turned to a narrative of the past in order to ameliorate the present in ways that are very similar to the German search for origins. The politics of identity seems to take for granted the need to narrate identity through a nostalgic narrative of an alternative past.

The second development that has led to the recognition of the relationship between narrativity and identity is a reconfigured conception of narrative that incorporates an understanding of its discursive tenor, whereby narrative is not construed as a straightforward representation of the real social world but rather as constitutive of it. As a result, narrative and narrativity have come to be reconceptualised as discursive devices that can both convey and construct social identities, thus linking narrativity to identity politics by tracking the mechanisms through which normativity and difference are constructed and maintained in a dialectical relationship. Margaret Somers has clearly expressed the confluence of narrativity and identity and its relation to the discursive placement of individuals and communities within the social world:

It is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities....[A]ll of us come to be who we *are* (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by being located or locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives *rarely of our own making*.

(1994:606)

Somers uses Lyotard’s concept of metanarratives (1984) as grand, overarching stories in which individuals are historically embedded, such as stories of the nation, of progress or degeneration, of the ‘end of history’, or, more recently, of the ‘war on terror’. Identities then, according to Somers, are always formed within broad discourses—worlds of available, created, and shared meanings—and are related to the historic positionings of

⁵ See, for example, Ucko 1968, 1996; Fleming 1969; Bamberger 1974; McCance 1990; Fagan 1992; Haaland and Haaland 1995; Wood 1997; Goodison and Morris 1998:6–21; Eller 2000.

the subjects involved, which are themselves constituted and given meaning through narratives.

The term 'identity' is by no means a straightforward or uncontested way of referring to the ways in which human beings organise and are positioned within society.⁶ This is partly because of the way in which the term emerged as an analytical category in the social sciences from the 1960s onwards, resulting in a distinction, most famously suggested by Pierre Bourdieu (1990), between its analytical utility and its praxis-based properties. The analytical use of the term has tended towards the view that 'identity formation' is a fragmented and contested process whereas the more common, everyday use of the term usually defaults to an essentialist, often primordialist naturalised reference to a stable core, an actual unity and internal harmony of 'selfhood'. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) have disputed even the analytical validity of the term, proposing instead substitute terms such as 'identification', 'self-understanding', and 'commonality'.⁷ Although they make a strong case for the use of the term 'identification' as an active processual term, my own use of the term identity seeks to preserve its actual ambiguity and is directed at investigating the tension between the analytical and practical uses of the term. However, the term identification would serve just as well because it preserves a sense of agency, indicating that the process of aligning oneself with an identity is an active and iterative one. As such, 'identity', can be conceived as an active work of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction, as Ronald Suny suggests:

[Identity is] a provisional stabilization of a sense of self or group that is formed in actual historical time and space, in evolving economies, politics, and cultures, as a continuous search for some solidity in a constantly shifting world—but without closure, without forever naturalizing or essentialising the provisional identities arrived at.

(1999/2000:144)

However, when people speak of identity, their language often omits a sense of this historical construction or contingency and instead almost always affirms a present identity as fixed, singular, bounded, internally harmonious, distinct from others at its boundaries, and marked by historical longevity, if not rooted in nature. As such,

⁶ See Strauss 1959; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Berger 1974; Gleason 1983; Sen 1985; Taylor 1989; Giddens 1991; Bauman 1992; White 1992; Calhoun 1994; Appiah and Gates 1995; Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995; Martin 1995; Posnock 1995; Hall and du Gay 1996; Tilly 1996; Laitin 1998.

⁷ Stuart Hall, however, warns against the unreflexive substitution of 'identity' with 'identification', suggesting that it too is 'almost as tricky as, though preferable to, "identity" itself; and certainly no guarantee against the conceptual difficulties which have beset the latter' (1996:2). I will return to this point when I consider Jacques Derrida's reflections on the impossibility of either identity or identification in light of his claim that there is no identity without a 'disorder of identity' (1998:14).

identification seems to tread a contradictory path where discursive construction and contingent positionality are obscured by claims to an essential and stable self. Stuart Hall conveys these discursive properties of 'identity' well when he suggests the he uses the term 'identity' to refer to

the point of *suture* between on the one hand, the discourses and practices which attempt to...haul us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be 'spoken'. Identities are...points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us.

(1996:5–6)

Hall eloquently demonstrates the tenuous process of self-formation. It is this mutually imbricated and somewhat paradoxical conception of identity that I have explored so far through my analysis of the ways in which myth and mythmaking within the German search for origins regularly intersected to produce the appearance of an essential, naturalised form of identity. The identity so produced was shown to be a process of intricate construction, an essentially imaginative act—a form of mythmaking—that, whether deliberately or not, obscured the contingent and provisional nature of identification. Paul Ricœur, perhaps the best-known theorist of narrative identity, offers a broadly helpful explanation for the disjunction between essentialist and constructivist identity-formations that produce this paradoxical production of a stable self which I will now outline.

II. 'Oneself as Another': Ricœur and Narrative Identity

[Our own existence] cannot be separated from the account we can give of ourselves. It is in telling our own stories that we give ourselves an identity. We recognise ourselves in the stories we tell about ourselves. It makes little difference whether these stories are true or false, fiction as well as verifiable history provides us with an identity.

(Ricœur 1981:31)

It was in the third volume of *Time and Narrative* (1988) where Ricœur first formulated a phenomenological/hermeneutic treatment of the interrelationship of time, narrative, and human identity. Put simply, he argues that identity is constructed through narrative because narrative's particular properties of coherence and continuity enable individuals successfully to negotiate the traumatic disjunction between cosmological time as permanent and constant and the existential experience of phenomenological time particular to each individual as marked by change and inconstancy. For Ricœur, there is a mutual imbrication but also a disjunction between the constancy of temporality or cosmological time and the lived, contingent experience of phenomenological time. This disjunction is traumatic for individuals, Ricœur suggests, because it appears to be

contradictory and yet innately part of human being in the world. It is narrative, however, which is able to order scattered events into a new coherency—narratives are for Ricœur ‘arrangements of events into unified stories’ (2005:6371)—a process he refers to as the ‘synthesis of the heterogeneous’ (1984:8), thus seeming to resolve the fragmentation of phenomenological time in the stability and homogeneity of cosmological time. His main argument throughout his first article on the relationship between narrativity and temporality (‘Narrative and Time’, 1980) is that temporality is ‘the structure of existence that reaches language in narrativity’ and he defines narrativity as ‘the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate referent’ (1980:169).

Ricœur defines identity in terms of two categories: *idem* and *ipse*. *Idem* are those forms of identity that are based on notions of Sameness—the seemingly continuous and stable human existence which corresponds to cosmological time. For Ricoeur, this form of identity indicates static temporality in terms of sameness and similitude but he suggests that alone it is an inadequate basis for asserting selfhood because it obscures the dynamic, temporalised aspects of the self which he refers to as *ipse*. *Iipse* identity, defined by Ricœur as (individual) Selfhood, incorporates all the many changes an individual undergoes in the course of her or his lifetime. These two aspects of identity are mutually irreducible insofar as they are disconnected through what Ricœur refers to as an ‘interval of sense’ created by the opposition between the two forms of temporality (1992:124). A sense of stable identity, therefore, is formed through the fusion and co-existence of the *idem* and *ipse*; selfhood is always comprehended at least in part through reference to the constancy of corporeal and psychological criteria while at the same time being contingent and changing. As such, the temporalised understanding of the self that the idea of narrative captures for Ricœur suggests that the narrative self is a dynamic unity of change through time.

In *Time and Narrative* (1984) the combined force of the *ipse/idem* is presented as a narrative identity which concerns the telling and retelling of a life-story, a biography, whether factual or fictional, such that the figure of identity that emerges in the story offers an insight into the forms of the self in both phenomenological and cosmic time. It is narrative, Ricœur suggests, which enables the mediation of these two temporal dimensions, and he goes further to argue that without being able to resort to narrative the individual would be condemned to an irresolvable and unliveable aporia. The aporia of temporality resides in the fact, as Hayden White suggests, that humans are

unable not to think about their experience of time, and yet time can never be thought about 'both rationally and comprehensively' (1987:233–234, fn. 6). Ricoeur states that

speculation on time is an inconclusive rumination to which narrative activity can alone respond. Not that this activity solves the aporias through substitution. If it does resolve them, it is in a poetical and not a theoretical sense of the word.

(1984:6)

Ricoeur argues, therefore, that narrative is a universal and fundamental aspect of the social world and the primary mode through which the complex and aporetic temporality of human experience can be borne. Because the two temporal figurations are (like the *ipse* and the *idem*) irreconcilable, Ricoeur suggests that narrative attempts to mediate the resulting multiplication of aporia (1988:244–74) through a process of what he calls 'emplotment'. Emplotment is the manner through which the heterogeneous elements of a life story are brought together as a coherent narrative of causality and continuity, and as such it stands for what Ricoeur considered, after Aristotle,⁸ myth to be: 'Plot or *mythos* gives a tragic poem its structure and purpose: The fundamental trait of *mythos* is its character of order....' (1977:35).⁹ Through emplotment a sequence of events is configured in such a way as to represent 'symbolically' what would otherwise be inexpressible in language, namely the ineluctably 'aporetic' nature of the human experience of time (1984:41–42). Emplotment thus functions to organise the contingencies and resolve the paradoxes of existence into a coherent whole, into a third form of time that interleaves fiction and history, which for Ricoeur are the two main forms of narrative.

He characterises history as a secondary referential discourse, that is, an indirect reference to the 'structure of temporality' that gives to historical events related in a story the aura of 'historicality'.¹⁰ As such, history relates to the 'what was' of the past, but the

⁸ Aristotle used *muthos* as a technical term for a certain type of drama. In his *Poetics*, he considered both literature and music to be primarily modes of imitation (*mimesis*), differing in the medium, the objects, and the manner of imitation. Aristotle distinguishes *mimesis praxeos*, imitation of action (*praxis*), from *mimesis logou*, imitation of thought (*theoria*). The former he classified as an imitation of specific action, and *muthos* as an imitation of typical action.

⁹ Ricoeur has defined myth as 'a narrative of origins, taking place in a primordial time, a time other than that of everyday reality' which he contrasts with history (2005:6371).

¹⁰ Ricoeur's term 'secondary referentiality' indicates the double nature of all symbolic speech, that is as positioned between the literal and the figurative (1984:57–8, 77–82). In the case of historical narrative, its literal referent is the series of events of which it speaks while its figurative referent is the 'structure of temporality' which, following Heidegger, Ricoeur calls 'historicality' (*Geschichtlichkeit*). Ricoeur suggests that the two features of 'historicality' are 'the extension of time between birth and death, and the displacement of accent from the future to the past' (1984:61–62). Hayden White helpfully explains Ricoeur's distinction between the chronicle and the historical narrative: '[T]he crucial difference [between the chronicle and narrative history] is between the experience of time as a mere seriality [the chronicle] and an experience of temporality in which

events of history only acquire meaning, or significance, through narrative (1983:7). Thus, while Ricoeur rejects the possibility of historiography as being able to represent the 'what was' of the past wholly accurately, he supports its ability to act as a mediating composite of trace and figurative language that draws out, or supplies, the meaning of the past insofar as history, as a type of text, utilises literary forms in order to convey the world of the past that is only retrievable through its traces, the archive and testimony.¹¹ As such, history can never be a purely literal rendering of the past (see Kearney 2002:136). If history did not aspire to truthfulness, then there would be no possibility, for example, of opposing erroneous accounts of a particular sequence of events, such as those of Holocaust deniers. Ricoeur's claim is not that historians collectively overlay a narrative structure on a series of actual events that could just as easily be presented in another non-narrative form, but that historical events have the very same structure as narrative. In other words, it is their narrative structure that distinguishes historical events from natural events. As White notes, 'It is because historical events possess a narrative structure that historians, for Ricoeur, are justified both in regarding the story-form as a valid representational medium of such events and in treating these representations as reasonable explanations' (1987:171).

Narrative fiction, like history, for Ricoeur, also mediates between cosmological and phenomenological experiences of time. Fiction is, in Ricoeur's thought, presented as synonymous with the novel, and he argues that novelistic fiction differs from history in that it can craft the past unconstrained by archival records and the 'truth-telling' imperatives of history, resulting in an imagination of the 'what might have been' of the

events take on the aspect of elements of lived stories, with a discernible beginning, middle, and end [narrative history]....Historians...[cast] their accounts in the form of narratives, because this mode of discourse alone is adequate to the representation of the experience of historicity in a way that is both literal in what it asserts about specific events and figurative in which it suggests about the meaning of this experience' (1987:177)

¹¹ Michel de Certeau has similarly reflected on history as a 'treatment for absence' (Ahearn 1995:9) where the object of enquiry (the past, conceived by Certeau as a radical Otherness) is irretrievably separated in time and space from the historian who nonetheless seeks to recover its presence. Certeau considers the interpretative acts of historians to be 'operations' which redistribute traces of alterity in order to make them comprehensible and thus manageable. Unlike Ricoeur, however, he argues that the irrecoverability of the past is problematically elided in the production of history, because of its unconscious obscuring of Otherness. The discipline of history thus carries a cumbersome weight: in order to exist; it must deny that it is a mere narrative, and it must, consequently, refuse epistemological reflection, that is, the elucidation of its own regulatory grounds—historians assert that their accounts are not merely stories but truths. He problematises the productive role of the historian in reconfiguring cultural artefacts into a coherent narrative, a process that he calls 'fabrication'. By fabricating accounts of the past according to context-specific regulations and processes, the historian produces the past and transforms it into history (1988:71). See also Certeau 1988:20–113 and Kellner 1987.

past. The fabricated past that fiction can conjure aids a redescription of the past mediated by the imaginative and moral insights of others, which may open up new ways to understand the past and therefore the self. The narration of identity through history and fiction thus creates a meaningful order out of the variability and discontinuities of life by grounding the self (*ipse*) in the similitude of the *idem*. At the same time, narrative, taken as a whole, enables the investigation of the potentialities of the self (*ipse*/fiction) relatively freed from the actualities of *idem*/history. As such, identity is formed through an interplay of trope and trace, or, more simply, through a negotiation between the oscillation of the productive imagination and the constraint of the archive. Only particular identities, particular narratives can be told, but they can be told imaginatively. However, for Ricœur, truthfulness is not entirely absent from fictional narratives but is rather of a different quality to that of history:

In the conventional sense attached to the term 'truth' by the acquaintance with this body of science, only historical knowledge may enunciate its referential claim as a 'truth'-claim. But the very meaning of this truth-claim is itself measured by the limiting network which rules the conventional descriptions of the world. This is why fictional narratives may assert a referential claim of another kind, appropriate to the split reference of poetic discourse. This referential claim is nothing other than the claim to redescribe reality according to the symbolic structures of fiction.

(1983:11)

Narrative identity, for Ricœur, is formed in three successive moments which he calls the circle of triple mimesis. The first, 'prefiguration', is the individual's experience of being-in-the-world that is semantically construed without any clarity of form or figure. The second moment is that of 'configuration' where the contingencies and inconstancy of experience are selected, shaped and then ordered within the framework of a plot, that is, a life is configured in the act of telling its story. The third moment occurs in the noetic act of reading where the self comes to a greater understanding of human experience over time through the mediatory effects of narrative and therefore returns from narrative text to action. This final moment results in a transformative understanding of oneself in the world: 'the fragile offshoot issuing from the union of history and fiction is the assignment to an individual or a community of a specific identity that we can call their narrative identity' (1988:246). Richard Kearney explains that the movement between these three reiterative stages is a mimetic and circular process of

movement from action to text [narrative] and back again—passing from prefigured experience through narrative recounting back to a reconfigured life world. In short, life is always on the way to narrative, but it does not arrive there until someone hears and tells this life as a story. Which is why the latent prefiguring of everyday existence calls out for a more formal configuring (*mythos-mimesis*).

(2002:133)

What historical and fictional narratives share in common, therefore, is twofold. Firstly, they share a single 'ultimate referent' (*Sinn*). While Ricoeur agrees that history and literature differ in terms of their immediate referents (*Bedeutungen*), insofar as both produce emplotted narratives their ultimate referent is the human experience of the 'structures of temporality' (1982:140–142). If history resembles literature it is because both speak figuratively ('symbolically') and therefore indirectly about the same ultimate referent—the structural aporia of temporality—which cannot be simultaneously spoken without contradiction and so has to be conveyed in the idiom of symbolic discourse. The difference, as I have noted, is that history and literature speak indirectly about the aporetic experiences of temporality by means of and through signifiers that belong to different orders of being—real events on the one side, imaginary events on the other.

The second area of commonality between the history and fictional narrative is their similar mimetic function. Here Ricoeur challenges Aristotle's distinction (*Poetics*, 1448a.1) between mimesis as an imitation of action/event which constitutes a fictional and imaginative redescription of the phenomenal world such that its hidden patterns and hitherto unexplored meanings can unfold, and diagesis, the straightforward, factual description of events, in order to demonstrate how narrative is both mimetic and diagetic (1985:36–37). For Ricoeur, the diagetic elements of history and fiction convey a descriptive representation of temporal identity and events while the mimetic elements are able to provide that identity with structure, coherence, and significance such that description and representation (the provision of meaning to the description) are bound up together. As White suggests, therefore,

In Ricoeur's view...narrative discourse...works up the material given in perception and reflection, fashions it, and creates something new, in precisely the same way that human agents by their actions fashion distinctive forms of historical life out of the world they inherit as their past.

(1987:178)

Ricoeur's work offers an insightful, descriptive, and strongly phenomenological account of how individuals struggle to assert a stable self against the contingencies of time through narration. As such it certainly has explanatory power for understanding how myths and mythmaking together, in the context of the German quest for a stable identity, were an important part of the apparatus of nation-building, such that the German search for identity could be read as a response to the unsettling disjunction between temporal aporias. However, I think that what is needed is a model that does more than explain, but rather challenges the ways in which narrative identity is

configured; there are three areas in which his theorisation of narrative identity proves, in my view, inadequate.

The first area concerns the normative and implicitly universalist presentation of identity in his work. Narrative, in Ricœur's work, is a politically neutral medium of self-formation and, therefore, he seems unable or unwilling to account for the damaging and oppressive potential of narratives as they encode the interests of specific groups and individuals, and as they serve to delineate between selves and others, (as discussed in the chapters above). In this sense, not all narratives have integrative qualities—some narratives deny some people a coherent self-identity. The self that emerges from Ricœur's account is seemingly unimplicated in the will-to-power or will-to-truth that I have shown is an integral aspect of myth and mythmaking. I am wary of his account of narrative because, from a feminist point of view at the very least, it does not seem able to address the ways in which narratives can function as negative templates of selfhood that disarm and harm women amongst other 'marginalised' groups. Narrative may indeed perform an act of integration but it is equally able to exclude and marginalise people as other to the narratively constituted self.

The second problem in Ricœur's account concerns his attitude to the language of narration as stable, reliable, and predicated on a communicative model of being that seeks the common good of all people everywhere. Consequently, the figure of identity that emerges from his account of narrative is very much an ordered and stable image of selfhood, and reflects his belief in the transparent and reliable structure of language. As Patrick Crowley suggests, although Ricœur

argues in favour of a mediation of self-understanding through texts, he subordinates the destabilizing potential of language to the principles of Aristotelian poetics, particularly the importance of composition and plot which result in the subordination of chance events to a teleological structure....[He] seeks to stabilize signification and save the identity of the subject by appealing to a greater good beyond narrative identity, namely a coherent notion of self-identity that ethically responds to the call of the other.

(2003:6)

His later work, particularly *Oneself as Another* (1992), stands as an example of Ricœur's appeal to stability in which he continues to consider the mechanisms of narrative identity. However, *Oneself as Another* also marks a striking shift in his thinking regarding the basis upon which identity formation can take place. It seems to have been a response to the claim regarding the fragmented nature of identity, and of the constitution of individuals in language, posited by poststructural and postmodern theorists such as Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan (explored below).

In *Oneself as Another* Ricœur takes up the problem of ethical action and the place it has in the formation of identity. He suggests a model of identity that crosses the divide between self and other as opposed entities through an analysis of friendship (that is, a non-agonistic relationship between two selves predicated on an acceptance of the mutuality of being) and by implication, of ethical action. Friendship, for Ricœur, operates on the basis of three structural principles: reversibility, non-substitutability, and similitude (see also Flood 2000:211). Reversibility concerns the interchangeability of the pronouns 'I' and 'you' because the designated 'you' also refers to an 'I': 'When another addresses me in the second person, I feel I am implicated in the first person' (Ricœur 1992:193). Non-substitutability suggests that the 'I' nonetheless remains discrete insofar as the substantive difference between the 'I' and the 'you' cannot be completely removed and the two pronouns are not syntactically or indeed ontologically interchangeable from the perspective of the 'I' (here Ricœur seems to employ a structuralist sense of the differential logic of language that I will outline below). Finally, similitude relates to the eponymous notion of 'oneself as another' in that the 'I' must recognise the other as like itself and therefore as similarly agentive (*ibid.*). For Ricœur, as I have noted, selfhood is posited in relation to a particular narrative sequence—the person in phenomenological time—which is then placed in relation to others within a linguistic and social community. It is in the telling of oneself to another that one is revealed as both an 'I' and a 'you'.

However, Ricœur's analyses of particular narratives forces him to acknowledge that there are narratives (he focuses on Robert Musil's 'modernist' novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*; 'Man without Qualities') in which the identity of the 'I' (*ipse*) can be systematically deconstructed by the narrative itself to the extent that narrative no longer provides the comforting mediation between the temporal contingency of phenomenological time and the static sameness of cosmological time. This is because it does not allow for—in fact, actively disrupts—a settled coherency of both time and self. He opposes modernist novels to folklore which he argues epitomises the unchanging character of human beings, a tactic that bears a similarity to the claims of authenticity that constituted the Grimm brothers' folkloristics discussed in Chapter 5. The protagonists of folktales (and of realist novels) serve as the exemplars of narrative identity in *Oneself as Another* on the basis that their characterisations (usually in the third person) invite the reader to identify or otherwise—but certainly position her- or himself in reference to—a choice of action in the tale, consequently providing the reader with, at

the very least, a provisional or virtual narrative identity. Further, it is the unambiguously moral force of folklore and its undertone of authenticity that appeals to Ricœur as he attempts to settle on a narrative form that secures identity.

The significance of Ricœur's claim in this regard is that it emphasises how the self comes to self-realisation through the mediation of the fictional (or real) other rather than through its own self alone. Against this form of characterisation, Ricœur sets modernist novels. He suggests that the disintegration of narrative identity is bound up with the disintegration of the narrative (novelistic) form:

The erosion of paradigms...strikes both the figuration of the character and the configuration of the plot. Thus in the case of Robert Musil, the decomposition of the narrative form paralleling the loss of identity of the character breaks out of the confines of the narrative and draws the literary work into the sphere of the essay. Nor is it by chance that so many contemporary autobiographies...deliberately move away from the narrative form and move into the literary genre with the least configuration—the essay.

(1992:149)

That Ricœur singles out the autobiographical form as an exemplar of the instability of contemporary narrative is at first glance puzzling. One would expect that, in Ricœur's terms, autobiography is rather the most obvious form of narrative identity, the genre through which individuals are best able to narrate the coherency of their own lives. This is because autobiographical works appear to negotiate and resolve the potentially fraught relationship between subject and writing and the possibility of drawing the contingencies of existence into a configuration that suggests the stability of the self over time.

However, recent work on autobiography indicates that rather than stabilising the self, the very act of setting down an account of one's life may perhaps result in destabilisation thus revealing a latent sense of unease in the narrator: the temptations of fictionalising memories, the tensions between competing versions of the self through time, the uncertainty that might erode the identity of an 'I' as it attempts to recover and re-present the past. Autobiographical narratives reconstruct the events of a life in the light of 'what was not known then'; the narrative reconstruction of a life history provides the opportunity for a retrospectively teleological rereading of events, and the analysis the autobiographer undertakes in the process of writing these events 'seeks those intentions which would have been determinate of the good fortune or misfortune, of the subject, had they been recognized as such' (Forrester 1990:210).¹² Linda Williams

¹² Nicola King provides a painful example of this retrospective inscription of a teleology on past events in a story she tells of the Holocaust survivor Leon Greenman, who, at an anti-Nazi League

understands this retrospective signification through recollection as an element of narrative that challenges the straightforward linearity of time, suggesting that 'If subjects come into being through their relationship with narratives, then narratives are formed in time; but...the form of narrative time...does not flow in only one direction' (1995:126). As such, narrative can only achieve coherency after the fact (and a tenuous, fragmented coherency at that)—the narration of a life story relies on selective and partial remembrance in search of meaning. Andrew Benjamin suggests that autobiography is a form of 'retranslation' (1992:149). In some autobiographies¹³ the process of retranslation will be more consciously acknowledged than in those autobiographies where the 'I' who speaks is assumed to be coterminous with the 'I' who is spoken of. Benjamin applauds the 'present imperfect translation...ceaselessly...push[ing] for renewed translation' which inscribes the 'dynamic of a self-presencing that is always, and of necessity, incomplete' (1992:146). It is perhaps this aspect of autobiography that Ricoeur recognises and then rejects because the 'decomposition' that appears to be inherent in this kind of autobiographical narration does not only 'parallel the loss of identity' but is rather constitutive of it.

Rather than investigate the implications of narrative disintegration for his theory of narrative identity, Ricoeur transfers his loyalty away from narrative and towards the field of ethical action precisely at the point where the stability of the self is put in question. It would seem, therefore, that when particular narratives undermine identity to such an extent that the nature and stability of the 'I' has been put in question and hangs in the balance, then the narrative's utility has been exhausted and the individual must seek identity elsewhere. In his article 'Narrative Identity' (1991) Ricoeur advises his readers to be wary of identifying too closely with narrative identities because of the possibility of being disarmed and fragmented by narrative disintegration, and in so doing he prioritises ethical action over narrative. He therefore defers moments of

meeting in Winchester in 1994, narrated the story of his arrival, with his wife, at Auschwitz where he saw his wife taken away to the gas chambers, although he stated that 'he didn't know that then'. As King recalls, 'His memory of that moment seems to have been deeply affected by what he didn't know at the time of the event: what he also has to remember is the painful fact of his own ignorance, as if not knowing was in some way culpable, as if it deprived him of a degree of moral responsibility, or of human agency. His memory has been forced to assimilate later knowledge which now also belongs to the wider realm of 'history': what he can never recover is the 'innocence' of the time when he "didn't know"' (2000:1). She goes on to suggest that this 'paradoxical "knowing" and "not knowing" is the position of any autobiographical narrator, who, in the present moment of the narration, possesses the knowledge that she did not have "then", in the moment of the experience' (2000:2).

¹³ Benjamin draws examples from the work of Carole Steedman (1982; 1996), Georges Perec (1989), and Ronald Fraser (1984).

identification to the world of ethical action (in friendship), arguing that it is praxis alone that can finally stabilise meaning and therefore identity. It is not only action, however, that assists the definition of identity; the statement of a promise to another connects speech to action and in so doing defines the *ipse/idem* as constant through and within change: 'The properly ethical justification of the promise suffices of itself, a justification which can be derived from the obligation to safeguard the institution of language and to respond to the truth that the other places in my faithfulness' (1992:125).

The implication of this statement, as I understand it, is that in keeping one's word, one is able to stabilise language through an intention expressed in words which is then followed through by action. It is in keeping one's promise, Ricœur argues, that both language and the self are able to withstand the traumatic aspects of the temporal disjunction between cosmological and phenomenological time. As such, this form of identity is congruent with the claim he makes throughout *Oneself as Another* that the self is defined through its acknowledgement of and response to the other and that contingency can be come to terms with through a continual act of self-affirmation that is consequent upon the ethical choices one makes and the actions one takes. However, the problem I have with this view is that it presupposes the inherent stability and transparency of language and allows Ricœur to ignore the increasingly influential claim that selves, and even the concept of 'self', are created in language. Poststructuralist theorists, for example, have shown the impossibility of fixing language as a transparent and stable system of representation and this has had enormous implications for understanding subjectivity, as I will discuss in the following section and in the next chapter. Any attempt to fix identity in language must, after the poststructural turn, acknowledge the metonymic, supplemental, and inconstant structure of language and the fact that even the assertion of a stable self is subject to a diversity of possible and ongoing interpretations where any stability of meaning is always already in doubt. However, rather than pursuing the possible imbrication of self and language, and the differential logic of texts, Ricœur turns to realist texts and folklore. Ultimately, this enables him to argue that it is moral action—moral through language—which defines personal identity and which subsumes narrative identity within the greater cause of ethical order. It seems to me, therefore, that Ricœur's work is founded on a presupposition that language is available for the individual to use as a tool for the attestation of the self, rather than on the very different poststructural proposition that meaning, self, and the act of attestation are themselves products of a differential

language structure. As such he reveals a nostalgia for the certainty of meaning and thereby of the self.

The third area of difficulty that I have with Ricœur's account is related to the first two. He portrays temporality as linear and therefore as a coherent economy of past, present, and future, even if that linearity is created in narrative rather than replicating some inherent property of the world. He denies, for example, that the world of experience is completely unformed prior to narrative, but suggests that narrative introduces configurative meanings which are not found there: 'The ideas of beginning, middle, and end are not taken from experience: They are not traits of real action but effects of poetic ordering' (1984:37). As I have shown, for Ricœur, narrative's ability to produce a 'poetic ordering' is necessary for the attestation of identity (because narrative can confront and mediate the multiplications of aporia that characterise temporality and the distinctions between the *ipse* and the *idem*). He strongly asserts the *beneficial* aspects of linearity, because linearity equates to meaningfulness and coherency. However, rather than being a product of narrative, it could be argued, at the very least from a poststructural perspective, that linearity is itself an element of linguistic, rather than narrative, ordering inasmuch as it inscribes a differential logic that enables the assertion of past-present-future as sets of differential and arbitrarily linked relations. As such, the meaning or significance of this kind of linear configuration cannot be derived through the prioritisation of any one aspect of its chain of meaning, but only in reference to its other signifiers. Ricœur's prioritisation of the linearity of narrative inscribes, therefore, an intrinsic reliance on continuity and causality as the only means through which the coherency and stability of identity can be maintained, and thus it recalls the triadic model of nationalist rhetoric that I argued defined the German cultural nationalist project. What separates Ricœur's utilisation of temporal linearity from that of the triadic model is that he offers a primarily descriptive account of identity narration as an ethical enterprise (albeit the only one) that does not privilege any one aspect of the temporal line, rather than as an enterprise which is didactically oriented towards retrieving identity as essence and which prioritises the past over the present as in the case of German nationalism. Where Ricœur privileges the organising principle of linearity over the instability of disintegrating narratives, in the German case the past was valorised against the present and towards the future.

Nonetheless, both accounts of temporality may be seen to constitute a form of what Jacques Derrida names 'logocentrism', where the meaning of any given sign

(within language, but also necessarily within metaphysics)—in this case past, present, or future—is provided through differential relations (binary oppositions) that appear to stabilise meaning by prioritising the first term in any given pair. As Barbara Johnson suggests, ‘In general, what these hierarchical oppositions do is to privilege unity, identity, immediacy, and temporal and spatial presentness over distance, difference, dissimulation and deferment’ (2004:viii). If this is in fact the structure of western metaphysics and of language in general, then the German prioritisation of the past might seem to contradict the logocentric privileging of ‘presentness’. However, in my view, the derogation of the present and the search for a glorious past that would ground a stable German identity in the context of the nationalist project was in fact an attempt to derogate only a particular form of the present and as such was a response to the need to stabilise the present, to ameliorate its destabilising properties rather than to reject it altogether. Further, the past itself could only be defined as a present which had passed. Ricœur’s reliance on narrative as logically continuous and causal also reveals a logocentric assumption of the stability and unifying aspects of language. Because of his logocentric prioritisation of linear temporality, he is able to present identity as a coherent narrative of continuity and causality precisely because it privileges the notion of being as a presence, albeit negotiated and strived for. It is a prioritisation that is predicated on what he identifies as the universal human need to resolve the phenomenological disjunctions between past, present, and future in order to stabilise identity as a coherent narrative form.

I am reminded here of a startling passage in Michel Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) where he suggests a connection between the assertion or identification of historical continuity and the ‘sovereign self’ of Enlightenment formulations, while first remarking that the elision of discontinuity is a marker of the sovereign self’s inability to come to terms with the Other. It is a passage worth citing at length because of its clear and incisive analysis of the type of ontological dependence on continuity that for him marks modernity:

It is as if it was particularly difficult, in the history in which men retrace their own ideas and their own knowledge, to formulate a general theory of discontinuity, of series, of limits, unities, specific orders, and differentiated autonomies and dependences. As if, in that field where we had become used to seeking origins, to pushing back further and further the line of antecedents, to reconstituting traditions, to following evolutive curves, to projecting teleologies, and to having constant recourse to metaphors of life, we felt a particular repugnance to conceiving of difference, to describing separations and dispersions, to dissociating the reassuring form of the identical. Or, to be more precise, as if we found it difficult to construct a theory, to draw general conclusions, and even to derive all the possible

implications of these concepts of thresholds, mutations, independent systems, and limited series....As if we were afraid to conceive of the Other in the time of our own thought....

Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject: the guarantee that everything that has eluded him may be restored to him; the certainty that time will disperse nothing without restoring it in a reconstituted unity; the promise that one day the subject - in the form of historical consciousness - will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that are kept at a distance by difference, and find in them what might be called his abode. Making historical analysis the discourse of the continuous and making human consciousness the original subject of all historical development and all action are the two sides of the same system of thought. In this system, time is conceived in terms of totalisation and revolutions are never more than moments of consciousness.

(1972:12)

As such, according to Foucault, it would seem that 'the discourse of the continuous' goes hand in hand with the regulation of the self as an autonomous unity, and, further, is a discourse which, after Derrida, might be said to rely on a logocentric impulse for narrative ordering implicit in what he refers to as the 'metaphysics of presence'. In what follows, I want to investigate further the dynamics that underlie the rejection of discontinuity as a ground for subjectivity in favour of continuity (expressed through linearity). I will return to the politics of identity with which I began this chapter, outlining Derrida's critique of logocentrism as a mechanism of stabilisation that obscures the fluid, unstable, and ambiguous nature of both language and identity. I will then extend his critique to analyse the extent to which patrilinearity can be viewed as an expression of the logocentric impulse for the ground of identity as stable, unified, and present.

III. Self/Other and Patrilinearity

In Chapter 5 I noted how Derrida's critique of phonocentrism, as a subset of logocentrism, was a useful way of understanding and challenging the prioritisation of orality over written sources in the context of the Grimms' collection of folklore. In this section I want to apply his concept of logocentrism to an analysis of the constitution of the 'self', or of identity more generally, within western metaphysics. I will do so in order to demonstrate that the structuralist supposition that all signification is dependent on negative relations of irresolvable difference—modelled on the synchronic structure of language as identified by Saussure—is less clear-cut than the structuralists would have

it.¹⁴ If individuals cannot think or be without language, as structuralists have suggested against the phenomenological tradition that begins with Edmund Husserl (1859–1938),¹⁵ then the idea of a ‘self’ or ‘subject’ ceases to refer to a metaphysical absolute, a self-evident ‘given’ of existence and becomes something constructed in and through language. In this way, the rejection of the transparency of thought, of *a priori* structures of rationality, and the downgrading of the ‘subject’ from a transcendental foundation to an empirical construction are mutually inseparable presuppositions of the adoption of a structuralist approach. This model of language and ontology plays a central part in Derrida’s thought. In the poststructuralist turn inaugurated by Derrida (amongst others) the formative nature of language as established by the structuralists is taken for granted, but Derrida demonstrates a series of paradoxes that underlie the structuralist positions,

¹⁴ Briefly, the intellectual movement that became known as ‘structuralism’ originated with Saussure’s analysis of the phenomenon of language as a signifying system predicated on relations of negative difference. For Saussure, the most important relation between signifiers in language, one that creates that value of any given sign, is the idea of difference. One signifier has meaning within language, not because it is connected to a particular signified, but because it is not any of the other signifiers in the system. Saussure referred to this difference as a negative value and proposed that language does not begin from meanings that it then labels, but rather meaning occurs because of the differential relations within language. Saussure’s analysis was extended to the examination of different social systems and became known as Structuralism, flourishing during the middle of the twentieth century, most influentially in France. The most well-known structuralists in this vein were Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes (at least in his earlier work). In general Structuralism can be defined as the systematic analysis of human sociality through the identification of all the structures and systems that underlie all the things that humans do, think, perceive, and feel. Structuralist analysis posits these systems as universal: every human mind in every culture at every point in history has used some sort of structuring principle to organise and understand cultural phenomena. For instance, every human culture has some sort of language, which has the basic structure of all language: words/phonemes are combined according to a grammar of rules to produce meaning. Every human culture similarly has some sort of social organisation (for example, government), a system for who can marry whom (a kinship system), and a system for exchanging goods (an economic system). All of these organisations are governed, according to structuralist analyses, by structures which are universal, that is, they all operate on the assumption of different units working in conjunction with others to establish order. More formally, a structure is any conceptual system that has the following properties: (1) wholeness; (2) transformation; (3) self-regulation. For Structuralists, the order that individuals perceive in the world is not inherent, but is rather a product of consciousness. However, structuralists do not posit that there is no ‘reality out there’, beyond human perception, but rather that there is too much ‘reality’ to be perceived coherently without some kind of ‘grammar’ or system to organise and limit it. See Sturrock 1979, 1993.

¹⁵ Husserl viewed signs as derivative and dependent indications of meaning which he defined as what is present to consciousness at the moment of any given utterance. His central thesis, as articulated in his *Logical Investigations* (1900) and *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (1931) was that the world is constituted by consciousness and that consciousness is intentional. That is, every act of consciousness is directed at some object, whether material or abstract. For Husserl, the work of a phenomenologist is to distinguish and describe the nature of the intentional acts of consciousness and the intentional objects of consciousness, which are defined through the content of consciousness. In *Ideas*, Husserl defends a strongly realist position: the objects that are perceived by consciousness are taken to be not merely objects of consciousness but the things themselves.

querying the structuralist assertion of universality, its presentation of language and social structures more generally as static, totalised, and stable systems (see Derrida 1982; 2002; 2004—all originally published in 1972). Poststructuralism thus has some important implications for understanding the constitution of selfhood as unstable and tenuous, an aspect that suggests it may be open to an ethical reconfiguration as I will discuss briefly here and detail more fully in the final chapter.

In his most well-known work, *Of Grammatology* (1978), Derrida undertakes a critique of western metaphysics by examining its prioritisation of speech over writing, suggesting that this occurs because of a foundational privileging of presence over absence.¹⁶ Thus, speech is privileged because both the speaker and listener are assumed to be present to the utterance concurrently without any temporal or spatial disparity. The one who speaks hears her- or himself in the same instant as the listener, and this contiguity appears to secure the notion that in speech a person's meaning is transparently present. Regardless of whether or not complete understanding is actually secured between speaker and listener, this notion of consummate self-present meaning is, according to Derrida, the foundational ideal of western culture. For Derrida, the history of metaphysics has always determined being as presence and he suggests that

It would be possible to show that all the terms related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the centre have always designated the constant of a presence—*eidōs*, *archē*, *telos*, *energeia*, *ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject), *alētheia*, transcendentality, consciousness or conscience, God, man, and so forth.

(2001:353)

I will return to Derrida's analysis of the centre shortly. What I would note here is that Derrida suggests that underlying all metaphysical constructs is presence as an organisational principle of coherency, regardless of which element of the system is singled out as foundational. The belief in the self-presentation of meaning at the moment of utterance is logocentric in that the spoken word stands at the centre of language as the original organising principle of the whole system. In the oppositional schema of speech and writing, therefore, writing must be considered by the logocentric system to be merely a representation of speech, a second-order substitution that attempts to overcome the distance and disparity between the speaker/author and

¹⁶ Derrida's project in his early writings is to elaborate a science of writing called *grammatology*: a science that would study the effects of this *différance* which western metaphysics has systematically repressed in its search for self-present Truth. But, as Derrida himself admits, the very notion of a perfectly adequate science or –logy belongs to the logocentric discourse which grammatology would try, precisely, to put in question. Derrida thus finds himself in the uncomfortable position of attempting to account for an error by means of tools derived from that very error. I am of course attempting something similar in this thesis.

listener/reader but that cannot succeed in doing so because distance signifies either the absence of the speaker, the listener, or both. Thus when the writer puts pen to paper, his or her thoughts become distant both from her- or himself and from the potential reader. This recognition of distance and difference is thought within logocentrism to be a corruption of the self-presence of meaning and to open meaning up to all forms of adulteration through the vagaries of interpretation which the contiguity between speaker and listener could hold off.

However, Derrida shows that the opposition of the two terms on the basis of presence/absence, or contiguity/distance is deceptive, because speech, like writing, is always already inhabited by difference and distance. This is because, at least according to Saussure, a sign is divided into a phonic signifier and a mental signified, and language is a system of differences rather than a collection of independently meaningful units. So language is already constituted by the very distances and differences it seeks to overcome. As Johnson interprets Derrida, 'To mean, in other words, is automatically *not* to be. As soon as there is meaning, there is difference' (2004:ix). Derrida's word for the differential delay inherent in any signifying act is *différance*, from the French verb *différer* (both 'to differ' and 'to defer') (see Derrida 2002:7). He further notes that the *-ance* ending in the term signifies an 'undecidable' element of language that disrupts the coherency of oppositional thought:

[B]ecause it brings us close to the infinitive and active kernel of *différer*, *différance*...neutralizes what the infinitive denotes as simply active, just as *mouvance* in our language does not simply mean the fact of moving, of moving oneself or of being moved....We must consider that in the usage of our language the ending *-ance* remains undecided *between* the active and the passive....[T]hat which lets itself be designated *différance* is neither simply active nor simply passive, announcing or rather recalling something like the middle voice, saying an operation that is not an operation, an operation that cannot be conceived either as passion or as the action of a subject on an object, or on the basis of the categories of agent or patient, neither on the basis of no moving towards any of these *terms*. For the middle voice, a certain nontransitivity, may be what philosophy, at its outset, distributed into an active and a passive voice, thereby constituting itself by means of this repression.

(1982:9)

As such, *différance* as an operation that is inherent within any act of signification disrupts and disallows any solid assertion of straightforward differentiation in terms of hierarchical distinctions that oppositions encode. And it is significant that Derrida suggests that philosophy 'at its outset' repressed this undecidability. Here he could be obliquely referring to the 'primal scene' of philosophy where a distinction was enforced between itself as *logos* and its other as *muthos*. This is a point I will return to at the end of the next chapter.

Derrida's neologism '*différance*' is central to his practice of deconstruction in that he recognises, after Saussure, that signification is only possible because of differences (usually presented as a series of binary oppositions) between signifier and signified: if there is no difference, there is only redundancy rather than signification. Because the elements of signification are negatively relational—*a* is *a* because it is not *b*, for example—there is nothing present 'behind' a sign that guarantees the stability of its meaning without ambiguity, and this prevents any possibility of achieving a definitive, determinate, or singular reading of a system of meaning such as language or metaphysics. Jonathan Culler defines deconstruction clearly when he describes it as

a critique of the hierarchical oppositions that have structured Western thought: inside/outside, mind/body, literal/metaphorical, speech/writing, presence/absence, nature/culture, form/meaning. To deconstruct an opposition is to show that it is not natural and inevitable but a construction, produced by discourses that rely on it, and to show that it is a construction in a work of *deconstruction* that seeks to dismantle it and reinscribe it—that is, not destroy it but give it a different structure and functioning.... [A]lso a mode of reading, deconstruction is...a 'teasing out of warring forces of signification within a text', an investigation of the tension between modes of signification, as between the performative and constative dimensions of language.

(1997: 22)

Close scrutiny of the significances, or presentation of meanings, in a relational pair reveals, for Derrida, an aporia, a moment at which the illusion of determinacy and singularity breaks down because of an internal inconsistency or blindspot. Furthermore, because there is difference, there is always a space (*espacement*)—a gap (an aporia), a rupture—between signifier and signified which means that while one meaning or set of meanings is foregrounded, another is simultaneously and temporarily put on hold, or 'deferred'. The idea of deferral resists the closure of meanings which might appear to be the effect of difference, because the process of signification is seen always to delay or displace immediate or pure intelligibility. If the foregrounded meaning is viewed only as a meaning *effect* produced by a filtering process, *différance* requires that one also consider what has been filtered out, or marginalised, in order to open interpretation to a range of new possibilities. Meaning thus can be seen to rest upon lack or absence (of signs) rather than presence.¹⁷

¹⁷ Derrida theorises two means of registering this absence: the supplement (*supplément*) and the trace. He argues that each element in a system of meaning (for example, a signifier) 'is related to something other than itself but retains the mark of a past element.' (1973:6) which he calls a 'trace'. Traces are the various kinds of marks which rupture our certainty about the relation between an element and its meaning. A supplement is something 'added on', seemingly deliberately, to a prior term in order to address an omission within it. Thus, the supplement appears to be exterior and secondary to the primary term it supplements. Derrida, however argues against the

What Derrida argues first in *Of Grammatology*, and then throughout his oeuvre, is that *différance* inhabits the very core of what appears to be immediate and present. Even in the seemingly non-linguistic areas of the structures of consciousness and the unconscious, Derrida analyses, for example, the underlying necessity that induces Sigmund Freud to compare the psychic apparatus to what, for Derrida, is a structure of scriptural *différance*, a 'mystic writing-pad' (see Derrida 2004:246–291). The illusion of the self-presence of meaning or of consciousness is thus produced by the repression of the differential and deferred structures from which they spring. Thus, even Saussure's theory of the structure of differentiation that marks language is predicated on *différance*: the opposition between a material signifier and intelligible signified must already have been marked out or traced by a process that cannot be brought to full presence.

The totalising imperative of logocentrism—its endless attempts to fix and guarantee meaning by keeping paired terms in a negative relation—functions through its identification of a centre as guarantor of meaning. As Derrida suggests, 'By orienting and organizing the coherence of the system, the center of a structure permits the play of its elements inside the total form. And even today the notion of a structure lacking any center represents the unthinkable itself' (2001:352). However, because of his identification of *différance* at work in logocentrism, he wants, instead, to identify a structure without a centre, to decentre the centre, or, if that is unthinkable, to problematise the way in which, for structuralists, structures are always organised around centres, origins, points of presence and power, while their boundaries remain impermeable (see Derrida 2001:351–370). Between the centre and the margins of structures, Derrida finds a space, a resistance built into the attempted uniformity of the system; and he locates its breakdown—*différance*—at the point at which it tries to draw its own limits. Derrida has introduced into structuralist analyses, therefore, a recognition of a system's radical instability. In any system, he has suggested, there will always be sites of force that are, precisely, forced, and that therefore allow for pressure and intervention which may open up the possibility of emancipation from (or, at the very least, resistance to) the totalising logic of the structure.¹⁸ Thus madness as the

metaphysical logic which places the supplement in a secondary or derivative position to a prior term. He suggests that if the supplement is necessary to compensate for the absence it reveals in a prior term, then it is not so much an external extra as a necessary constituent of the term it supplements.

¹⁸ This claim bears a good deal of resemblance to Kurt Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem which he proved in 1931. Gödel essentially demonstrated that within any given branch of mathematics, there would always be some propositions that could not be proven either true or false using the

excluded other of the operation of reason, inside/outside structures, the same and the other, the reign of violence in the difference between the same and the other, the ethical relationship to the Other, alterity, difference, differences in identity, identity that is different from itself—all these are made visible, effecting the destabilisation of the system. In examining what identity is, therefore, in the context of Derrida's work, the logic of identity as sameness, that is, as a product of logocentrism, can be brought into question.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (9th edn.) defines the term 'identity' in two ways: 'the state of being the same in substance, nature, qualities, etc., absolute sameness; [in] Algebra, the equality of two expressions for all values of the quantities expressed by letters [as in the equation $(x + 1)^2 = x^2 + 2x + 1$]' . Thus, according to the *OED*, whether in the relation expressed in mathematics and logic by the symbol $=$, or in terms of an individual identity, the term 'identity' indicates *absolute sameness*, the condition of being a specified person or thing which is the same in all situations and circumstances through time. It is constancy, therefore, that appears to constitute identity. This definition of identity would correspond to Ricœur's notion of *idem* identity, that is, sameness. Yet if identity is sameness it is, at the same time, also signified through difference; paradoxically, it can only be defined by difference from other things or people. As a concept, therefore, the inscription of 'identity' necessarily summons its opposite, difference. Rather like the structure of metaphor in which one can only say *what* something is by saying what it is not, in order to say *who* one is, one has to say who one is not. In the realm of identity politics, for example, a form of sameness between two or more persons is declared as the basis for solidarity against another group.

Identity politics, however, evoke not only the power structure implicit in the hierarchy of same and other, but also the fact that in this same-other relation the identity of the other is only defined in relation to that of the same, not in terms of its own qualities. The identity of the other group is only a negative image; the 'other' is thus a unitary category, like the same, applicable to any number of groups who are characterised without any specificity, inasmuch as they are all 'others'. Identification

rules and axioms of that mathematical branch itself. One might be able to prove every conceivable statement about numbers within a system by going *outside* the system in order to come up with new rules and axioms, but by doing so all that would be achieved would be the creation of a larger system with its own unprovable statements. The implication of Gödel's theorem is that *all* logical systems of any complexity are, by definition, incomplete; each of them contains, at any given time, more true statements than it can possibly prove according to its own defining set of rules. See van Heijenoort 1967:596–616.

understood in these terms conforms to the basic model that Edward Said established in *Orientalism* (1978). The 'oriental' other's only identity (within orientalist discourse) is that which is imposed on 'it' by the Occident, as other to the Occident's self; but, as Said persuasively shows, this other is nothing more than a mirror in which the Occident sees the disowned parts of itself, and through which it is able to *orient* itself precisely as a self. Samuel Weber also describes this strategy well when he states that in order to define itself, any group must 'simultaneously set itself apart from what it is not' and yet remain 'ineluctably haunted by what it seeks to exclude' (1982:33). As I have already shown in the case of late nineteenth-century German anti-Semitism, this dual movement was at work in the efforts to define Germanness as distinct from Jewishness. This identity so construed was reliant on—haunted by—a model of elided biblical ethnology that had placed the Jews as the original people, and as such the model had to be both appropriated and reemployed in order to establish the originality of the German people. I will return to offer an analysis of the significance of this strategic dual encoding of identity shortly. First, however, I want, via Derrida, to examine the particular metaphysical logic that posits the self as the same—the self-same¹⁹—against (but always in reference to) an other.

Derrida has defined metaphysics as follows:

The enterprise of returning 'strategically', 'ideally', to an origin or to a priority thought to be simple, intact, normal, pure, standard, self-identical, in order then to think in terms of derivation, complication, deterioration, accident, etc. All metaphysicians, from Plato to Rousseau, Descartes to Husserl, have proceeded in this way, conceiving good to be before evil, the positive before the negative, the pure before the impure, the simple before the complex, the essential before the accidental, the imitated before the imitation, etc. And this is not just one metaphysical gesture amongst others; it is the metaphysical exigency, that which has been most constant, most profound and most potent.

(1988:236)

¹⁹ The term 'self-same' in Derridean discourse comes from the French term '*propre*' and corresponds to 'ownself'. It suggests both property and appropriation (enveloping) as well as the notion of the proper, the appropriate, and the clean. It bears some similarity to the term 'sacred' from the Latin root *sacer* 'to set apart'. Otherness cannot be constituted as a self unless it conveys the properties of selfhood as a bounded entity. For example, femininity as the apparent opposite of masculinity does not, in dualist thinking, share the properties of the masculine self and so is represented as the other of the self-same. This enables the constitution of the masculine self as bounded, but it simultaneously threatens the purity of that boundary and must therefore be contained, appropriated, or effaced. Masculinity on the other hand can recognise other masculinity because it corresponds, more or less, to the self-same.

As such, metaphysical thought, in much the same way as language, is premised on a division,²⁰ one that is immediately and deliberately hierarchical. However, even such a division itself secures the legitimisation of its hierarchical valuation through the assertion—enabled by a prioritisation of the first term of singularity, that is, the singularity of the origin. According to this logic, the division is thus necessarily repressed or rendered secondary through the prioritisation of singularity as origin. Such an origin forms a stabilising centre for logocentric discourse because an origin seems to guarantee being as presence by enabling the assertion of an ‘I *am*’. Singularity is presumed, therefore, to precede duality, in the same way that presence precedes absence.²¹ For Derrida, then, all metaphysics in the western tradition privileges presence or that which *is*. This has some important implications for understanding how the self might be construed as an undivided—singular—self-presence and also as an origin.

Within Derrida’s analysis of logocentrism, the function of a binary opposition in every case is not to hold two terms in tension as equal but different, but rather to distil singularity from duality, signalling, therefore, that western metaphysics is troubled by anything that exceeds singularity. Because of the valuation of the first term in any given pair as singular—in this case, the self—the other must signify more than one and as such must be either managed or marginalised as inessential. Thus, if the self is both temporally and qualitatively primary within the terms of a dualistic metaphysics, the self can be logically construed as prior to, and therefore the origin of, the other. In this way, otherness, as such, cannot help but share the qualities of the self—and yet otherness is nonetheless syntactically inscribed as oppositional to the self. Its similarity to the self is thus necessarily, but paradoxically, devalued and derogated.

Derrida refers to this inscription of the singularity of the self as a violence, and suggests that the assertion of the self as ‘One’ is enabled by an act of forgetting that the self is always already divided, that it constitutes a scene of self-otherness:

As soon as there is the one, there is murder, wounding, traumatism....The one guards against the other. It protects *itself* from the other, but, in the movement of this jealous violence, it compromises in itself the self-otherness or self difference (the difference from within oneself), which makes it One. The ‘One differing, deferring from itself’. The one as the other. At once, at the same time, but in a same time that is out of joint, the one forgets to remember itself to itself, it keeps and erases the archive of this injustice that it is. Of this violence that it does....The One

²⁰ Derrida is alert, at the same time, to the problems inherent in identifying division as a site of origin: ‘The attempt to write the history of the decision, division, difference runs the risk of construing the division as an event or structure subsequent to the unity of an original presence, thereby confirming metaphysics in its fundamental operation’ (2004:48).

²¹ A similar idea occurs in early Indian philosophy. See *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* LIV.1–3.

makes itself violence. It violates and does violence to itself, but also institutes itself as violence. It becomes what it is, the very violence—that it does to itself. The determination of the self as one is violence.

(1995a:78)

Thus violence is not only enacted against otherness, but also against the self because the construal of the self as the self-same erases or denies its divided origin, an origin that for Derrida consists of a movement of differing and deferring. As such, origins might be read as a site of *différance* rather than of temporal singularity and distilled essence.

I want to suggest, therefore, that when an other is defined against the self, in a profound sense it is not really other at all, because the other is become part of the same. If the other must be part of the identity of the same for the same to be itself at all, then the same is riven with an alterity which might open it up to the difference of the other, effecting an inner dispersal. Identity consequently becomes decentred, and cannot be defined except as non-essential and negative. The significance of this is that meaning is not fixed: if identity is differential, it is open to change, it is porous. It can constantly be remade in relation to all through which it is negatively defined (Derrida 1978:128).

Derrida's argument that the structure of language is 'logocentric', which he extends to account for the organisational properties of metaphysics more generally, has enabled the application of his work to the field of gender theory. Here the analysis of the structural function of binary oppositions in language has been extended to demonstrate the alignment of the first term in any pair with masculinity and the second devalued term with femininity. Hélène Cixous has developed this idea to argue that the structure of language is predicated on a gendered division where linguistic and conceptual oppositions signify a foundational couple, that of male and female. In her essay 'Sorties' (1996:63–132) she lists a series of binary oppositions that she claims have structured western thought—male/female, activity/passivity, order/chaos, language/silence, presence/absence, speech/writing, light/dark, good/evil—suggesting that the first term is privileged over the second because it is aligned with masculinity:

Everywhere (where) ordering intervenes, where a law organizes what is thinkable by oppositions (dual, irreconcilable; or sublatale, dialectical). And all these pairs of oppositions are *couples*. Does that mean something? Is the fact that Logocentrism subjects thought—all concepts, codes and values—to a binary system, related to 'the' couple, man/woman?...We see that 'victory' always comes down to the same thing: things get hierarchical. Organization by hierarchy makes all conceptual organization subject to man. Male privilege, shown in the opposition between *activity* and *passivity*, which he uses to sustain himself. Traditionally, the question of sexual difference is treated by coupling it with the opposition: activity/passivity.

(1996:64)

The consequence of this alignment is to produce women as a sign of negativity, passivity, powerlessness, and death. Toril Moi usefully summarises the implications of Cixous's analysis

for one of the terms to acquire meaning...it must destroy the other. The 'couple' cannot be left intact: it becomes a general battlefield where the struggle for signifying supremacy is forever re-enacted. In the end, victory is equated with activity and defeat with passivity; under patriarchy, the male is always the victor.

(1989a:125)

Consequently, dualist thinking is reducible to singularity, to a logic of the masculine as the self-same. In the context of the German search for origins, as I have shown, singularity and duality were placed in the same awkward and paradoxical relationship but this secured a foundation for a solid expression of German identity against a backdrop where such an identity was in question and under threat. And this was achieved in explicitly gendered terms. In the case of German nationalism, its nostalgia for 'Aryan' origins secured a solid basis for the establishment of a German 'fatherland', the expression and imagination of a distinctly Germanic, autochthonous identity, and the means through which it could be favourably contrasted to a fabricated spectre of threatening, and feminised, Jewishness. I argued in the previous chapter that this discourse of differentiation was predicated on a patrilinear model of inheritance that enshrined fathers as the source and origin of German culture. In what follows I want to extend my identification of patrilinearity examined in the context of the German search for origins to western metaphysics more generally, in order to argue that patrilinearity has been a trope employed with striking regularity throughout the history of western metaphysics for the reason that it seems to offer a stable and reliable point of origin for individual, masculine ontology.

The issue of what I am calling 'patrilinearity' in myths of origin and its relationship to assertions regarding the singularity of identity clearly requires some clarification here. My central claim is that patrilinearity is monological in its very essence: it seeks singularity as its organising principle and it is singularity, rather than presence, as Derrida would have it, that is the defining preoccupation of western metaphysics historically. In my view, paternity, origins, and singularity, and the concomitant appropriation of a procreative-reproductive function for males, are intertwined and interdependent in western metaphysics, permeating scholarly rhetoric regarding notions of intellectual lineage, legal rulings on inheritance, concepts of citizenship, literary production, the monotheistic basis of the Judaeo-Christian religious matrix, and almost every other cultural form or expression imaginable. The concept of

patrilinearity invokes a series of lexical associations and continuities, all of which point to the originary, unifying, authorising, and singular power of the father: *pater*–*pater familias*–paternal–paternity–*paternalis*–patriarch–patriarchy–*patrie*–patrician–patricide–patriot–patrimony–patristic–patron–patronage–patronal–patronise–patronymic. Each term is connected through an etymological economy of patriliny and as such gestures to ‘the Father’ as a self-contained singularity, the origin of an almost complete social system—of governance, kinship, social status, inheritance, cultural legitimacy, ownership of territory, national affiliation, and so on. The father-as-origin/originator establishes a non-transcendable basis upon which individuals—men and women—can assert their connection with each other and the authority by which these bonds are maintained. As such, the father signifies the imposition of a regulatory law upon which social relations are founded and sustained. Culture, as the social form that inscribes male bonding is conceived as an expression of paternity, the frequent notion being that ‘culture’ somehow owes its origin, its validity or legality, even its coherence, to some deep structure or principle identified as *the* father.

Maternity, by implication the ‘other’ of paternity, is rendered *culturally* or *symbolically* incoherent, an anomaly that is regularly resolved by associating it with its lexical derivative, matter or material, and consequently derogating it to nature and representing it as secondary or inferior to culture. Thus, as Judith Butler puts it, when ‘reason and mind are associated with masculinity and agency’ then ‘body and nature are considered to be the mute facticity of the feminine, awaiting signification from an opposing masculine subject’ (1999:48). If language guarantees meaning (signification) then, in Butler’s terms, it is a masculine enterprise that creates of women a no-place. ‘Woman’, as such, is an empty signifier and women’s being can only be deemed to be constituted—originated—through a masculine subject, logically a father.

For Cixous, it is the logic of the self-same that underlies the prioritisation of patrilinearity within western metaphysics:

[W]oman is always associated with passivity in philosophy. Whenever it is a question of woman, when one examines kinship structures, when a family model is brought into play. In fact, as soon as the question of ontology raises its head, as soon as one asks oneself ‘what is it?’, as soon as there is intended meaning. Intention: desire, authority—examine them and you are led right back...to the father. It is even possible not to notice that there is no place whatsoever for woman in the calculations. Ultimately the world of ‘being’ can function while precluding the mother. No need for a mother, as long as there is some motherliness: and it is the father, then, who acts the part, who is the mother. Either woman is passive or she does not exist. What is left of her is unthinkable, unthought. Which certainly means that she is not thought, that she does not enter into the oppositions, that she does not make a couple with the father (who makes a couple with the son).

(1996:64)

In an important sense, therefore, the figure of the father within a patrilineal schema—whether linguistic, philosophical, juridical, and so on—is erected as a sign of origin and of non-transcendable singularity. As such it seems to constitute an implicit ontological law. Butler has suggested that the law (of the father) named as patriarchy necessarily points to a ‘pre-judicial’ past to sustain its claim to authority:

The self-justification of a repressive or subordinating law almost always grounds itself in a story about what it was like *before* the advent of the law, and how it came about that the law emerged in its present and necessary form. The fabrication of origins tends to describe a state of affairs before the law that follows a necessary and unilinear narrative that culminates in, and thereby justifies, the constitution of the law. The story of origins is thus a strategic tactic within a narrative that, by telling a single, authoritative account about an irrevocable past, makes the constitution of the law appear as a historical inevitability.

(1999:46)

The notion of the law of the father(s) as inevitable—natural—is precisely what patrilinear rhetoric is able to achieve through its presentation of temporality and ontology as inexorably linear. Moreover, the authority of its claims can be seen to rest on the assumption of a procreative metaphor for masculine endeavours such that the authority of the father is inscribed in his creation of order under the sign of the law. In the following chapter I will explore this metaphor in the context of Lacan’s structuralist psychoanalytical theories.

Edward Said’s etymology of the word ‘authority’ provides an instructive case for understanding the relationship of origins to paternity and the regular appropriation of metaphors of procreation by males to explain their activities in the sphere of culture (particularly the production of narrative as linear coherency):

Authority suggests to me a constellation of linked meanings: not only, as the OED tells us, ‘a power to enforce obedience,’ or ‘a derived or delegated power,’ or ‘a power to influence action,’ or ‘a power to inspire belief,’ or ‘a person whose opinion is accepted’; not only those, but a connection as well with *author*—that is, a person who originates or gives existence to something, *a begetter, beginner, father, or ancestor*, a person also who sets forth written statements. There is still another cluster of meanings: *author* is tied to the past participle *auctus* of the verb *augere*; therefore *auctor*...is literally an increaser and thus a founder. *Auctoritas* is production, invention, cause, in addition to meaning a right of possession. Finally, it means continuance, or a causing to continue. Taken together these meanings are all grounded in the following notions: (1) that of the power of an individual to initiate, institute, establish—in short, to begin; (2) that this power and its product are an increase over what had been there previously; (3) that the individual wielding this power controls its issue and what is derived therefrom; (4) that authority maintains the continuity of its course.

(Said 1973:83; my emphasis)

He later remarks that ‘the unity or integrity of [a] text is maintained by a series of genealogical connections: author—text, beginning—middle—end, text—meaning,

reader—interpretation and so on. Underneath all these is the imagery of succession, of paternity, or hierarchy' (1973:162).

According to Said's etymology, the logic of patrilinearity is apparently bound up with concepts of linear continuity, and, perhaps more importantly, with causality—that the patriline follows a pattern of linear inheritance, handed from fathers to sons, and that fathers are the paradigmatically causative agents as they establish their bloodline whether literally or figuratively. The issue of patrilineal continuity and causality is in turn connected to narrativity, the notion that every story must have a beginning, a middle, and an end, as Said suggests. More broadly, therefore, a narratology such as Ricœur's that operates by prioritising continuity and causality as coherence is arguably embedded in a patrilineal model. The efficacy of continuity, as Said demonstrates, is that it enables the identification of a single origin and thus implies the paternal agent as original cause: 'begetter, beginner'. This reproductive simile, within a phallogocentric economy, must necessarily efface or appropriate the procreative potential of women. Paternity as conveyed in a patrilineal schema is thus also a form of mimesis, an appropriation of metaphors of biological reproduction in order to found male agency and authority. Patrilinearity, as a paradigmatic mechanism of self-identification through recourse to a father as origin, has enabled the male gender in a variety of contexts to be promoted as a sole progenitor, and thus father, master, and owner of both biological children and 'brainchildren'. In the process women are necessarily deprived of any authoritative share in cultural production and by implication, in procreation. Examples of this elision of female participation are too numerous to list here, but one could consider the promotion of a father God as creator in the monotheistic traditions of Judaism and Christianity, the endless textual genealogies that establish inheritance down the male line, or in the myths of male parturition such as that of Zeus, Metis and Athena, as appropriations of procreative metaphors that establish the authority of the patriline.

In Hesiod's *Theogony*, as I touched on briefly in Chapter 6, the story of the goddess Athene's birth is related. Zeus learns that if his wife's second child is born, he will lose his power. In order to forestall this danger, he takes his pregnant wife Metis, places her in his belly, and then, '...produce[s], from his own head, grey-eyed Athene, fearsome queen who brings the noise of war and, tireless, leads the host' (*Th.* 924–925). One could also recall how in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* Athene's paternal parentage is used to justify the matricide of Clytemnestra by her son Orestes. Clytemnestra has murdered

her philandering husband Agamemnon, in part as revenge for his having sacrificed their daughter in the name of military expediency and sexual honour. Orestes kills Clytemnestra and takes refuge in the temple of Athene where he is put on trial. Athene's casting vote ensures that he is vindicated. She finds in favour of Orestes because she herself is motherless, and so for her, fathers are the true parents of their offspring (Aeschylus *Or.Eu.* 736–738). Motherhood is also completely negated by Apollo (son of Athene) who claims that

The mother is no parent of that which is called her child, but only nurse of the new-planted seed that grows. The parent is he who mounts. A stranger she preserves a stranger's seed, if no god interfere....And of this truth, that father without mother may beget, we have present, as proof, the daughter of Olympian Zeus: one never nursed in the dark cradle of the womb.

(*Or.Eu.* 659–666).

Within the *Oresteia*, the order of the reproductive process is inverted and (the father's) sexuality and death take precedence over the mother's parturition and over birth. Clytemnestra becomes the agent of death, while the son born of her reproductive labour transforms his birth relationship into a death relationship, murdering his only certain parent on behalf of the dubious sexual honour of his uncertain father. As Mary O'Brien points out, these events 'rest absolutely and resolutely on the negation of femininity, in the symbolic person of motherless Athene' (1981:155–156). The *Oresteia* exemplifies the broader ideological configuration of the father as originator within the classical Greek tradition and it was extended over time to Christianity. In this classical view, all modes of personal experience, communal order, law, economy, and justice derive from a beginning marked by paternal reference, a locus in a hierarchy of associations articulating origin and order.

Taking the *Oresteia* as an example of the assertion of patrilinearity as a first order parentage, the idealisation of the father that the story represents necessarily ensures a prioritisation of creation over procreation, production over reproduction, and culture over nature—all of which are embedded in the oppositional form of gender differentiation that characterises phallogocentrism. As Martha Weigle suggests, therefore, within a patrilineal economy,

Procreation is the antithesis of creation; to be procreant is not to be creative; and parturition is not symbolically equivalent to cosmogony. This polarizing means that procreation is relegated to elemental or physical or biological status, while creation—viewed as spiritual or metaphysical or symbolic—becomes the valued paradigm for important rituals, customs, narratives, and belief systems. Both androcentrism and ethnocentrism figure in this opposition.

(1987:427)

O'Brien similarly suggests that the appropriation of procreative metaphors to describe male cultural endeavours is a displacement of patrilineal anxiety over the verifiability of paternity. She argues that male thinkers from Plato onwards have sought to create modes of continuity and intellectualised mimicry²² of the reproductive process for the reason that

They must resist the alienation from nature and from time which is inherent in their reproductive praxis, investing intellectual creativity with a power superior to ambiguous procreativity, and creating institutional and ideological modes of continuity over time, to heal the discontinuous sense of man the uncertain father.

(1981:131)

Thus a patrilineal economy represses maternity-as-origin in order to assert male primacy and legitimacy for the possible reason that paternity itself is less than securely anchored and verifiable. There is a sense in which the notion of paternity is, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar note, a 'legal fiction', a 'story requiring imagination if not faith', for '...a man cannot verify his fatherhood by either sense or reason after all: that his child is his. It is, in a sense a tale he tells himself to explain the infant's existence' (1984:5). While a mother can know with certainty that a child is hers by virtue of having carried it in her womb and given birth, a father, at least until the advent of DNA testing, cannot.²³

²² Luce Irigaray's early work provides a very productive interrogation of the masculine mimicry of female parturition. See Irigaray 1985b.

²³ Said's analysis of prevalent notions of authority and author reveals a similar concern in narrative production, and to some degree in the arena of scholarship. The preoccupation within scholarship with the form and structure of scholarly endeavour, particularly concerning historical and textual referents, functions to establish the authority of the scholar and is perhaps rooted in, or at least connected to an anxiety over the verifiability of male paternity. It is not an overly imaginative leap to see how the genealogical connections that constitute patrilinearity are visible in the relationship of scholars to their texts, sources, and history. That the achievements of intellectual predecessors are absorbed and then approved or rejected is a central practice in scholarship and the relationship of scholars to those who have preceded them is regularly stated in patrilineal terms: one's 'intellectual forefathers', the 'fathers' of any given field of study, and so on. The compulsory negotiation of one's forefathers purportedly establishes one's mastery of a field of study, but, as Gilbert and Gubar point out, the dynamics of the confrontation with one's intellectual ancestors can produce an 'anxiety of influence', a phrase they borrow from the literary theorist Harold Bloom (1973). This anxiety of influence is a fear that an author is 'not his own creator and that the works of his predecessors, existing before and beyond him, assume an essential priority over his own writings' (1984:46). Gilbert and Gubar suggest that the historical relationship between authors, and, I would add, scholars, is akin to one of fathers and sons, particularly as described by Freud's theorisation of the Oedipal crisis. Thus the scholar must 'engage in heroic warfare with his "precursor" for, involved as he is in a[n]...Oedipal struggle' he can only be established as a scholar in his own right by somehow invalidating, or working in reference to, his intellectual forefathers (1984:47). The anxiety of influence is partially resolved by a successful absorption of the past, but it is further ameliorated by the motif of patrilinearity that renders the scholar/author a father, or owner of his texts, as Said's discussion of authority implies. Gilbert and Gubar go further than this to suggest that male sexuality is intimately connected to the

It is possible, therefore, that patrilinearity is a longstanding means of ameliorating the anxiety that doubt over parentage could invoke. As such, the certain assertion of a patriline conveys a hidden undercurrent of uncertainty which is perhaps why it is invoked as a trope with such striking regularity—it requires continuous reiteration. Whether or not this is the case, the assertion of a patriline has arguably been a determinative factor in the forms of ontology that have been developed in the public history of western thought, particularly as they have depended upon a dualist (and paradoxically monologic) model of identity that elevates singularity to the status of a primary ontology. Thus masculinity, in the form of fatherhood, is stabilised and prioritised and the maternal body as an equal origin of being is repressed. Fatherhood is a fundamentally fragile construction that requires the endlessly iterative myths of continuity and causality that constitute patrilinearity. In my view, the psychoanalytic literature derived from Sigmund Freud's considerations of the 'Oedipal crisis' and from Jacques Lacan's modifications provides a compelling account of the reasons for, and implications of, this displacement of patrilineal anxiety.

In the following chapter I will explore the tenuous basis of identity formation within patrilineal rhetoric through the poststructural rereading of Freudian psychoanalysis undertaken by Jacques Lacan, and then in the final chapter discuss the challenges offered and adjustments made to this reading by Julia Kristeva. While Lacan himself offers a patrilineal model of identity, he does much to explain the essential fragility of the construction. Julia Kristeva, on the other hand, by focusing on the significance of maternity in the identity-work of individuals offers a model of identity that is well placed to undo the patrilineal logic of being that I have discussed here. I will argue that she offers a means of viewing maternity as an ontological origin but one which can in no way be conflated with singularity and transcendence. Moreover, the models of identity she suggests on this basis, I will argue, offer a framework in which a feminist reading of narrative and myth can be conceived differently, that is, as non-linear, ambiguous, and disintegrative of solid identification. There is the possibility of unsettling the boundaries that are drawn up to distinguish selves from others

practice of authorship because it is 'not just analogically, but actually, the essence of literary power'. They argue that a writer's pen is 'even more than figuratively, a penis' and contend that 'the patriarchal notion that the writer "fathers" his text just as God fathered the world is and has been all pervasive in western literary civilisation' (1984:4). In a patriarchal society, a 'text's author is a father, a progenitor, a procreator...whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis. Moreover, his pen's power, like his penis's power, is not just the ability to generate life but the power to create a posterity to which he lays claim' (1984: 6).

agonistically, and so I will argue that narrative, language, and selves might be brought together in a discourse of discontinuity that prevents the assertion of selves as singular and autonomous, a discourse which has some important implications for understanding myth, particularly myths of origin, anew.

CHAPTER NINE

DIVIDED SELVES: PATRILINEARITY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

The account of child development provided by psychoanalysis strongly disputes any conception of the self as stable and coherent. Psychoanalysis suggests, instead, a model of subjectivity as discontinuous and divided and thus stands alongside Derrida's theorisation of logocentrism and deconstruction as inaugurating the 'poststructural turn' in philosophy and the human sciences. It is for this reason that I turn, in the first section of this chapter, to psychoanalytic theory, particularly that of Jacques Lacan who 'rereads' Freudian theory through a poststructuralist lens. The form of psychoanalysis developed by Sigmund Freud stands, along with the theories produced by Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche, at the beginning of the anti-humanist tradition that developed into poststructuralism in the twentieth century (Grosz 1990:1–3; Olivier 2004:1–3). It presented a profound challenge to the post-Enlightenment concept of the self represented by the Cartesian *cogito* which conflated consciousness, or at least rational mental activity, with subjectivity. The destabilising moment inherent to psychoanalysis is Freud's notion of the unconscious as that aspect of the human mind which, as a 'place' differentiated from the conscious aspect, not only escapes the possibility of direct conscious access, but continually threatens to infiltrate conscious, 'rational' intentions and volitions.¹ Thus Freud stands as one of the precursors of post-structuralism (see Spivak 1976:xliv–xlviii; li–lv). However, he believed that, by bringing the contents of the unconscious into consciousness, he could minimise the repression and neuroses of his patients, an idea summarised in his famous declaration about the relation between the unconscious (the id) and conscious self (the ego), where the purpose of psychoanalysis is to ensure that '*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*' ('Where Id was, shall Ego be'; 1953–1974,

¹ Freud himself compared his theoretical discoveries to the Copernican revolution (1953–1974, XVII:139–40; 1917b:284–285). In Freud's view, the first challenge to the belief in the centrality of humankind was inaugurated by Copernicus' discovery that the earth, and by implication, humanity, was not at the centre of the universe. Darwin's contention that humanity is not the creation of God but rather has evolved from apes represented a second shift in human consciousness. Freud places his own analysis of the psychology of the unconscious as a third revolution in understanding the self in that it challenged the post-Enlightenment concept of the essence of the self as equated to consciousness.

XXII:80). The purpose of analysis, therefore, is to replace the repressed and chaotic drives of the unconscious with the 'I' (ego), by consciousness and self-identity.² Freud's goal was thus to strengthen the analysand's ego, in order to ensure that it would master the unconscious. For the poststructuralist Lacan, as I will show in this chapter, this project is impossible. According to Ellie Ragland-Sullivan 'Lacan...naturally opposed the idea that there is a *whole* self that serves as an agent of strength, synthesis, mastery, integration, and adaptation to realistic norms' (1986:119). For Lacan, the ego can never take the place of the unconscious, empty it out, or control it, because the ego is only an illusion, a product of the unconscious itself. Individuals, for Lacan, are positioned in and by language, and are consequently rendered as subjects—subjected to the order of language which robs the individual of her or his inexpressible uniqueness and power as vested in a singular and autonomous body. As such, Lacan's interpretation of Freud more clearly secures the poststructural credentials of psychoanalysis. I turn to Lacanian psychoanalysis in the first section of this chapter, therefore, to explain the ways in which identity is conceived by Lacan as constituted through otherness and division, as fundamentally unstable and in question, and as requiring a vigilantly iterative performance to maintain the illusion of the ego's autonomy and stability. I will argue that Lacan's theories consequently offer one way of explaining the anxiety that underlies the assertion of patrilineal provenance discussed in the previous chapter.

However, I will argue that psychoanalysis, at least in its Freudian and Lacanian incarnations, can itself be understood as a paradigmatic example of an assumption of patrilineal origins, particularly insofar as it seeks to understand how individuals come to consider themselves as autonomous and stable selves by describing the primal scene of childhood development as inaugurated by a father figure. It tracks the induction of a child into the world of regulated cultural discourses through the intervening force of the father, a movement that requires its separation from and negation of its mother, a process which constitutes an irretrievable loss. The father is thus ostensibly placed at the origin of culture which is viewed in psychoanalytic theory as the only viable mode in which individuals can function as integrated and healthy adults; culture represented by

² For Freud, the id is the place of instincts, 'the ultimate cause of all activity' (1949:19) and he therefore speaks of it as the true psychic reality: 'The core of our being...is formed by the obscure *id*' (1949:108). Unlike the ego (as consciousness), the id does not think; it only wishes and acts. It has 'no organization and no unified will, only an impulsion to obtain satisfaction for the instinctual needs, in accordance with the pleasure-principle' (1991:100). The id, as the unconscious, struggles for the complete and immediate satisfaction of its desires without regard for others and it is for this reason that it has to be tamed by the ego.

the father, rather than nature as represented by the mother, is reality in these terms. As such, despite its challenge to the Cartesian self—which holds a good deal of promise for feminist projects that seek to demonstrate the partiality of that self—psychoanalysis has presented particular difficulties for feminist theory, resulting in a strained and ambivalent relationship between the two (Grosz 1990:7).³ On the one hand, psychoanalysis offers a compelling explanation for women’s secondary social position within patriarchal societies. Thus, Juliet Mitchell, in defending the feminist use of psychoanalytic theory, declared that ‘psychoanalysis is not a recommendation for a patriarchal society, but an analysis of *one*’ (1974:xv). On the other hand, psychoanalysis has tended to validate hegemonic idealisations of normative masculinity and femininity, suggesting an essentialised and universal model of gender identity by aligning femininity with lack, passivity, and negativity and masculinity with wholeness, agency, and normativity. As such it seems to be a dangerous tool for feminists to wield without undertaking a series of critical adjustments to its core propositions. Elizabeth Grosz suggests, therefore, that

While [psychoanalysis] relies on certain conceptions of femininity and of women’s social and sexual functions...it is also amenable to transformations and upheavals in its operations. This involves challenging its central terms, assumptions, and, above all, its unspoken masculine perspectives and interests. But because of [its] unspoken reliance on particular notions of femininity, major changes in its notions of femininity will necessarily transform psychoanalysis, which has assumed women’s ‘castration’ and passivity as one of its fundamental principles. It is thus prone to far-reaching feminist questioning.

(1990:7)

It is my intention in this chapter to demonstrate the ways in which Lacanian psychoanalytic theory might not just be ‘prone’ to feminist challenge, but also aid it. While I will acknowledge some of the difficulties Lacan’s work presents for feminist theory, I will not engage in an extended assessment of the various reasons for and

³ For criticisms of the feminist use of psychoanalysis see Leland 1989; Fraser 1990; Flax 1990a:47–132, 1990b:109–119; Moi 2004. Flax does not reject psychoanalysis *per se*, but rather objects to a Lacanian approach in particular on the grounds that she believes it results in the ‘annihilation’ of femininity and renders male dominance ‘unanalyzable in theory and inescapable in practice’ (1990:112). Flax further suggests that ‘Lacan recreates the myth of the isolated, disembodied monadic self...[He] replicates rather than dismantles a dominant strain of modern Western thought that extends from Descartes through Rousseau to Sartre. The Subject is not “decentered” in Lacan’s theory’ (1990b:118). For reasons I discuss below, I consider Flax’s claim to be a rather strained and superficial reading of Lacan’s work. It is surprising, in addition, that she makes no mention of Julia Kristeva’s use of Lacan which precisely challenges his androcentric presentation of women, and motherhood in particular, but retains central aspects of his theories to rich effect. For more sympathetic (although not uncritical) feminist approaches to psychoanalysis, see Silverman 1988, 1992; Brennan 1991; Elliot 1991; Cornell 1993.

against the use of the Lacanian *oeuvre* for feminist purposes. Rather, I will limit my discussion to a demonstration of its utility for explaining the instability of a patrilineal model of the singular, atomised self and origins, one that bears implicitly on the preceding case study of the German search for origins, and for enabling a feminist analysis of maternity as a potential site of dialogic subjectivity and multiple origins, particularly as undertaken in the work of Julia Kristeva. This chapter is also intended, therefore, to serve as an introduction to the technical vocabulary and primary frame of reference used by Kristeva to theorise subjectivity as 'in process' which I then explore in the final chapter.

I. Stories of the Self: The Divided Self in Lacanian Psychoanalysis

Lacan claimed that his work was a 'return to Freud' in that, by inflecting it with the (post)structuralist analyses of Saussurean linguistics, he was true to the spirit, if not to the letter, of Freud's work (Walsh 1990:66). It was and continues to be a controversial claim, leading initially to Lacan's expulsion, along with a number of his colleagues and students, from the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) in 1952 (see Schneiderman 1983:141; Gallop 1985:55). There are certainly convergences between the theories of Freud and Lacan but where Freud sought to map psychoanalysis onto a biologically determinist framework at least in his early work,⁴ Lacan's interpretation stresses a much more constructivist dimension. One of the primary areas of intersection between Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis concerns the way in which both describe the process of infantile development (how the ego is formed out of the unconscious); another is the account of the basis of sexual/gendered differentiation that marks the end of infantile development. It is mainly these two processes that are my concern in this section.

Freud theorised early childhood (particularly infantile sexuality) as proceeding through three stages of 'polymorphous perversity': the oral, the anal, and the phallic that were brought to an end by the Oedipal and castration complexes enabling the transition of the child into an 'adult' being (see 1953–1974, VII:123–245).⁵ Lacan suggests different categories to explain a similar trajectory from infant to 'adult'. He theorises

⁴ He describes the development of infantile sexuality, in particular, in biological terms: 'In reality this development is organically determined and fixed by hereditary' (1953–1974, VII:178).

⁵ These phases are regulated biologically and 'generate a series of norms, ideals, or goals directed towards the end of heterosexual genital and reproductive sexuality' (Grosz 1990:55). See also Grosz 1990:51–58; Minsky 1996:31–47.

three concepts—need, demand, and desire—that roughly correspond to three orders or registers of development that occur more or less chronologically—the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic.

Lacan theorises the order of the Real as a (psychic rather than physical) site where the very young infant ‘experiences’⁶ the world as a unity, as a place of non-differentiation between itself and the objects that surround it. As in Freud’s account, for Lacan the newly-born infant (from birth until it is between six- to eighteen-months old) begins life as a fragmented and uncoordinated aggregate of body parts, experiences, sensations, and impulses—what Lacan refers to as an ‘anatomical incompleteness’ and ‘organic insufficiency’ (1977:4)—and it is unable to exert any control over its body and behaviour. Lacan suggests that the infant in this stage is ‘stuck in his motor incapacity and nursing dependency’ (1977:2) rather being an integrated and controlled totality or individuated identity. Because the infant at this stage is wholly dependent on others for its physical (and psychical) survival, it is driven by need (for food, comfort, safety, and so on). These needs are essentially satisfiable by an object: when the baby needs food, it is offered a breast or a bottle; when it needs safety, it is embraced. In this state of need

The child forms a syncretic unity with the mother, and cannot distinguish between itself and its environment. It has no awareness of its own corporeal boundaries. It is *ubiquitous*, with no separation between itself and ‘objects’, for it forms a ‘primal unity’ with its objects. It cannot recognise the absence [or otherwise] of the mother (or breast).

(Grosz 1990:34)

The child is unable to recognise that an object (such as a breast) is part of another whole person because it does not and cannot yet have any concept of ‘whole person’.⁷ In the state of non-differentiation in the early months of an infant’s life, there is also no sense of the loss, lack, or absence that later comes define and constitute the self; the Real is all fullness and completeness—Lacan refers to it as the ‘lack of lack’ (1981a:55). Because there is no absence, loss, or lack, there can be no language in the Real; language, at least

⁶ The term ‘experience’ does not accurately convey, however, that state in which the infant exists in the Real. The unity of the child with its world is a state of being unmediated by cognition. This is because ‘experience’ is, in Lacanian terms, a property of conceptualisation and representation which can only be inferred retrospectively to the Real through the reconstructive work of the Imaginary and Symbolic orders. See Grosz 1990:34–35.

⁷ Lacan’s theories, however much they might fail to supply an empirical basis for their claims, have a good deal of explanatory power as an imaginative construct. Indeed, Lacan characterised the temporal underpinning of the psychoanalytic narrative of infant development as a ‘myth’: ‘What I am telling you is also a myth, because I by no means believe that there is somewhere a moment, a stage at which the subject first acquires the primitive signifier, while after that play of significations is introduced, and later yet, signifier and signified having taken each other by the hand, we enter the domain of discourse’ (1981b:172).

according to structuralist analyses such as that of Saussure, depends structurally on difference (as non-unity) and deferral (as absence). The Real is always beyond language, unrepresentable in language, and therefore irretrievably lost when one enters into language. The infant begins to be able to distinguish between its body and the objects that surround it initially by its having to recognise and negotiate the intermittent absence of the mother.

II. Registers of the Self: The Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic Orders

Whether in Freudian or Lacanian terms, the child in the order of the Real exists in a state of 'nature' which has to be brought to an end in order for 'culture' to be formed. Thus the infant must separate from its mother and form a separate identity. The child is subsequently coerced into the identificatory relations that will make possible, constitute, and maintain the shape of its adult life. However, when the child can conceptualise the difference between itself and its mother and starts to become an individuated being, it loses its primal sense of unity (and consequently its sense of safety and security) and becomes figured as lacking, that is, as a being that can no longer exist as a non-differentiated plenitude—it lacks or loses the original state of wholeness. It is this process that reveals the element of tragedy built into psychoanalytic theory: to become a civilised 'adult' always entails the loss of an original unity, a sense of non-differentiation, and a merging with others (particularly the mother):

The child is no longer in that happy state of satisfaction, protected by and merged with the (m)other. From this time on, lack, gap, splitting will be its mode of being. It will attempt to fill its (impossible, unfillable) lack. Its recognition of lack signals an ontological rift with nature or the Real.

(Grosz 1990:35)

Moreover, as the infant starts to become aware that it is separate from the mother, and that there exist things that are not part of it, it begins to be able to comprehend the idea of 'otherness'.⁸

This development—the partial recognition of otherness—coincides with a shift in the child's orientation from having needs to making demands. The awareness of separation, or the fact of otherness, creates an anxiety and a sense of loss in the child. It then demands a reunion, a return to that original sense of fullness and non-separation that it had in the Real; essentially, it longs for the idea of the 'other' to disappear. The child may cry, and the mother will usually respond by attempting to meet its needs by

⁸ It is important to note, however, that at this point the binary opposition of 'self/other' does not exist cognitively for the child, primarily because it does not yet have a coherent sense of 'self'.

feeding or changing it. However, Lacan suggests that no object can, in fact, satisfy the demand because the demand is always for a response on a different level. Grosz summarises Lacan's concept of demand as follows:

The child wants everything, an impossible plenitude; it wants to be filled by the other, to *be* the other, which is why no determinate thing will do. It demands a love that paradoxically entails its own annihilation, for it demands a fullness of the other to stop up the lack that conditions its existence as a subject.

(1990:62)

Lacan claims that a demand is always a demand for a return to the original place of non-differentiation (1977:263). This is impossible, however, because lack, or absence—the sense of otherness—is the precondition for the child to become a self/subject, in that it ensures a self distinguishable from others. In addition, demand, in Lacan's view, is always addressed to the (m)other (1977:286).

Lacan here follows Freud's theorisation of how a child comes to negotiate its loss of unity with the mother. In a case study which appears in Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud relates how his young grandson, aged about eighteen months, plays a game with a spool tied with yarn:

This good little boy...had an occasional disturbing habit of taking any small objects he could get hold of and throwing them away from him...so that hunting for his toys and picking them up was often quite a business. As he did this he gave vent to a loud, long-drawn-out 'o-o-o-o' accompanied by an expression of interest and satisfaction. His mother and the writer of the present account were agreed in thinking that this was not a mere interjection but represented the German word 'fort' [gone]. I eventually realized that it was a game and that the only use he made of any of his toys was to play 'gone' with them. The child had a wooden reel with a piece of string tied around it....What he did was to hold the reel by the string and very skillfully throw it over the edge of his curtained cot, so that it disappeared into it, at the same time uttering his expressive 'o-o-o-o'. He then pulled the reel again by the string and hailed its reappearance with a joyful 'da' [here]. This, then, was the complete game: disappearance and return. As a rule one only witnessed its first act, which was repeated untiringly as a game in itself, though there is no doubt that the greater pleasure was attached to the second act. The interpretation of the game then became obvious. It was related to the child's great cultural achievement: the instinctual renunciation (that is, the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction) which he had made in allowing his mother to go away without protesting.

(1953–1974, VXIII:14–15)

Freud goes on to suggest that this game was a means of ameliorating the child's anxiety about his mother's absence. When he threw the spool he replayed the experience of the loss of an object, that is, the mother; when he reeled it in he gained pleasure from its restoration. Lacan uses this case to focus on the aspect of language it displays, suggesting that the fort/da game indicates the child's attempt to exert control over the mother's presence and absence through the medium of language insofar as it substitutes a linguistic device that it may control for the mother's presences and absences which it

does not. As such, the fort/da game indicates, for Lacan, the beginning of the child's entry into the Symbolic order (1977:112–114, 257–260, 282–283, 315–317), the structure of language itself, because language, as I have noted, is always marked by loss and absence.

The gradual awareness of the mother's absence implies the rupture of original unity and this takes place in the Imaginary order through what Lacan refers to as the 'mirror stage', a concept that has proved to be one of his most distinctive and accessible contributions to the field of psychoanalysis. As in the order of the Real, at this stage the child, between the age of six and eighteen months, does not yet have control over its own movements or a sense of its body as a whole. In his seminar 'The Mirror Stage as formative of the function of the *I* as revealed in psychoanalytic experience' (1977:1–7), Lacan describes the entry of the child into the Imaginary order by analysing its encounter with its mirror image and suggests that this experience lays the foundation for the future constitution of the self as autonomous and whole (1977:2).⁹ It is at this stage that the infant has begun to seek—to demand—a return to the unity it originally experienced with its mother. The child has begun to recognise because of her absences that its mother appears to be a totality apart from the child and because this recognition leads to a sense of loss in the child, the mirror stage serves as an intermediate phase as the child is impelled towards a complete separation which will eventually be resolved—albeit tenuously—in the Symbolic order. In the mirror stage, the child's separateness from the (m)other is simultaneously affirmed and denied. As Grosz suggests,

If we look more directly at the privileged stage for the acting out of the drama of the mirror state...that is, at the mother-child relation, in which the mother takes on the position of specular image and the child that of incipient ego, [then] the mirror stage is an effect of the discord between the *gestalt* of the mother, a total, unified 'completed' image, and the subjective, spatially dislocated, positionless, timeless, perspectiveless, immersing turmoil the child experiences.

(1990:42)

It is the previously unmediated tension between wholeness as represented by the mother and the fragmented corporeality of the very young infant that the mirror stage starts to resolve.

The act of seeing itself in the mirror is one that ensures that the child moves 'from insufficiency to anticipation'. The child, still unable to be whole, and therefore

⁹ Lacan suggests that the image of wholeness that a child is presented with in this stage occurs typically through an encounter with a mirror, although the form of the encounter—whether there is an actual external image or not, whether the child sees him- or herself in a mirror, or, by inference, in the gaze of someone else—is largely irrelevant.

fully separate from others (although it has started to have a notion of separation), begins to anticipate being whole. It moves from a 'fragmented body' to an 'orthopaedic vision of its totality', 'orthopaedic' because it serves as a crutch that assists the child to eventually achieve the sense of wholeness that is a prerequisite for becoming a subject. It is only gradually that the child comes to identify itself with its image in the mirror (Lacan 1977:5; see also Grosz 1990:35–37); but once it has conflated the image in the mirror as itself, it reacts to this discovery with delight because the image serves as a satisfying and seductive image of itself as a coherent whole.

The child's recognition of its own image means that it is able to adopt a perspective of exteriority on itself, one that is a *Gestalt* ('form') which grants the infant an impression of the totality of itself where it simultaneously becomes both subject and object (Lacan 1977:3). The child thus takes the image in the mirror as the summation of its entire being, its 'self' as a coherent and unified totality. It is an appealing image precisely because it seems both to negate the chaotic, unintelligible being that the child up until this point has experienced itself being, and it alleviates the anxiety of loss and absence that it has started to confront. The child's identification with its specular image as a totality that substitutes for that of its relation to the mother signals the start of a nostalgic search for completeness that the divided self, which is a product of the mirror stage, will always yearn for and be denied.

Lacan maintains that what is happening in the mirror stage is an identification that is, fundamentally, a misrecognition. While the child sees an image in the mirror and identifies that image as itself, it is not the child; it is an image. This process of misrecognising one's self in the image in the mirror creates the ego (*moi*), the being (subject) that will eventually be able to identify itself with the signifier 'I' (*je*). In Lacan's terms, this misrecognition creates the 'armour' of the subject, an illusion of wholeness, integration, and totality that surrounds and protects the fragmented body. The mirror image—the whole person the infant mistakes for itself—is referred to by Lacan as the 'ideal ego' (1977:2–3; 339–340), a perfect, sufficient self. In the mirror stage, this 'ideal ego' begins to be internalised and enables the child to create its sense of 'self'. As such, the child, according to Lacan, is able to *imagine* a self that has no lack, no incompleteness (1977:19). What is thus essentially a fiction of a stable, unified, and autonomous self that the child sees reflected in the mirror becomes a compensation for losing the original oneness with the mother's body. In short, according to Lacan, the child loses its unity with the mother's body, the state of 'nature,' in order to enter culture, but it protects

itself from the knowledge of that loss by misperceiving itself as not lacking anything—as being complete unto itself. Lacan argues that the self-concept (ego) that the child achieves at this stage will never, in fact, coincide with its actual being as figured in the Real. Its *imago* in the mirror is more stable than the child and is always ‘other’ than the child as something outside it. The child, for the rest of its life, will misrecognise its self as the whole and integrated other it sees in the mirror because it provides an illusion of self and of mastery. For Lacan the ego is always on some level a fantasy, an identification with an external image, and not an internal sense of separate whole identity, which is why he calls the phase of demand, and the mirror stage, the order of the Imaginary. The Imaginary is understood as a realm of images, whether conscious or unconscious. It is prelinguistic and preoedipal, and therefore necessarily based in visual perception, or what Lacan calls ‘specular imaging’ (1977:2).

Grosz very clearly explains the significance of the specular as a first-order recognition of (spatial) differentiation and distance—prior to the cognition of difference as a structural principle that is a fundamental element of the linguistic order of the Symbolic. The specular image is the enabling device through which the self can be articulated as a self in an apparently secure and stable relation of difference to an other, a point I will return to shortly. Grosz suggests that, more than any other sensory perception, it is vision that ‘most readily confirms the separation of subject from object’ (1990:38). This is because vision fulfils a ‘distancing function’ that renders the one who looks as ‘unimplicated in or uncontaminated by its object’ (*ibid.*). Thus vision, Grosz suggests, differs from the other senses insofar as where they involve a continuity between subject and object, and to some extent require the internalisation and incorporation of the object by the subject (as in the sense of taste or touch), vision is predicated on, and is able to maintain, its distance from the object of its gaze. In consequence, the visual is the most responsive of the senses to spatialisation, which Grosz suggest is ‘hierarchically organized and structured in terms of a centralized, *singularized* point-of-view by being brought under the dominance of the visual’ (*ibid.*; my emphasis). The implication of the singularity of the gaze in this context is that it is the visual alone that is able to direct the child to a totalised, holistic self-image which is necessarily be construed as singular. However, and somewhat paradoxically, it is only vision that seems to suspend the distancing effects of temporalisation in the moment of apprehension and this is a prerequisite for the contiguity between subject and object to be recognised by the child in the mirror stage. As Grosz suggests, ‘only the simultaneity

afforded by sight confirms the integrity of a cohesive self and body. None of the other senses have this ability to perceive “synchronously”, in a non-linear and non-temporal fashion’ (1990:39). I will return to examine further the implications of spatialised distance, the simultaneity of vision, and the maintenance of difference between subject and object when I discuss Kristeva’s theories of abjection in the next chapter.

The importance of the mirror stage for understanding the nature of identity, particularly with regard to its implication for the study of identity that is my concern in this thesis, lies in how Lacan demonstrates that the form of selfhood achieved in this stage is, against the Cartesian view, divided or split. It is divided in a variety of ways, not least insofar as the image in the mirror both is and is not an image of the child’s self. It is the dual, ambivalent relation to the self’s own image that is central to Lacan’s account of subjectivity and marks his difference from Freud who takes a realist attitude towards the ego as essentially in touch with and straightforwardly reflective of reality. For Lacan, when the child sees itself as a unified totality (*Gestalt*) in the mirror, what in actual fact occurs is a split between subject and object, self and other, and organic insufficiency and integrated totality—a split that remains the fundamental characteristic of the self/ego for the rest of its life.

The Imaginary, in summary, is the psychic place where the child projects its ideas of ‘self’ onto the mirror image it sees. The mirror stage begins the process of consolidating a self/other dichotomy, because where previously the child had known only ‘other’, in the mirror stage it begins to be able to formulate an image of the ‘self’. The realm of the Imaginary inaugurated by the mirror stage is where an alienated but obscured relation of the self to its own image is created and it is one which is maintained thereafter in the Symbolic order. The ego is forever divided between a body it claims as its own and an other (its image) that it strives to conform to. For Lacan, the identification of ‘self’ is always in terms of ‘other’—which is not to say that this is as a binary opposition, where ‘self’ equals what is not ‘other’, and ‘other’ equals what is not ‘self’; rather, ‘self’ is ‘other’ in Lacan’s view because the very idea of the self is based on an external image. However, Lacan uses the term ‘other’ in a number of ways, which can be confusing. As I understand it, the first sense in which he uses it is with regard to the division between self and other, where ‘other’ is the ‘not-self’; however, in the mirror stage the ‘other’ becomes, or is translated as ‘self’. Lacan also uses an idea of Other, to distinguish between the *concept* of Otherness and *actual* others—objects or people. According to Lacan, the concept of Otherness, encountered in the Imaginary phase (and

associated with demand), necessarily comes before the sense of 'self'. The image the child sees in the mirror is an actual other but its importance lies in the fact that it provides the child with the idea of 'Other' as a structural possibility, one which makes possible the eventual articulation of 'I' or self in language. As the child encounters actual others—its own image, other people—it begins to comprehend the idea of 'Otherness'.

As discussed above, the fort/da game that Freud's grandson played is in Lacan's view a marker of the entry into the Symbolic, because the child uses language to negotiate the idea of absence and the idea of Otherness as a category or structural possibility. The spool, according to Lacan, serves as an '*objet petit a*,' or '*objet petit autre*'—an object which is a little 'other' (1977:218–220).¹⁰ Lacan focuses on act of throwing it away, insisting that the child is primarily concerned with the idea of lack or absence of the '*objet petit autre*', showing the child that it (the child) is not complete in and of itself. It is also the gateway to the Symbolic order, to language, since language is premised on the idea of lack or absence. Lacan argues that these processes and concepts—of other and Other, of lack and absence, of the (mis)identification of self with o/Other—are processed on micro level with each child, but that they form the basic macro structures of the Symbolic order which the child must enter in order to become a full subject. Thus the otherness acted out in the fort/da game and the identification of and with difference in the mirror stage (between self and other, mother and child) become categorical or structural ideas in the Symbolic which is defined by the structuring principles of Otherness and Lack.

When the child has successfully formulated an idea of Otherness as a structural principle, and of a self identified with its own 'other', it is ready to enter the Symbolic order. The Symbolic order, marked by the concept of desire, and inaugurated by the 'name-of-the-father' (discussed below), is the equivalent of adulthood, or, in more specifically Lacanian terms, it consists of the structure of language itself, which must be entered in order for an individual to become a 'speaking subject', to be able to say 'I' and have it designate something which appears to be stable and autonomous. The Symbolic and the Imaginary orders overlap to some degree; there is no clear division between the two, and in some respects they always coexist. The movement from the Imaginary to the Symbolic consists of a shift from a visual register to a verbal one, but loss, illusion, and alienation remain the registers in which the subject is constructed and maintained. Where the foundation for recognising a self lies in the Imaginary projection of the self

¹⁰ See also 1977:244–245, 264–265, 268–269, 276–279, 292–294, 303–304, 347–350, 356–359.

onto the specular image, the Symbolic enables the projection of a somewhat different sense of self (one that Lacan refers to as 'subjectivity') which is, nonetheless, also divided between the 'I' that speaks and the 'I' which is spoken about (Cavallero 2003:30). Here the apparently fixed meanings offered in language as based on relations of difference offer an alternative, ostensibly stable *sense* of identity, a psychological place where the meaning of the self can again be discovered through its difference to others. As with the child's identification with its whole image reflected in the mirror, within the Symbolic the child is able to identify with the certainty and coherency of meaning in language which appears to grant the stability and distinction (conceptually and linguistically) of the signifier 'I' (Minsky 1996:142).

However, again as with the mirror stage, Lacan argues that the achievement of subjectivity in the Symbolic is not as coherent or as stable as it appears. Symbolic subjectivity, like its mirror-stage predecessor, is also a result of misrecognition, Lacan claims, because the subject in language misperceives itself as the autonomous author of its utterances when, in fact, it is spoken by language in the sense that identification proceeds via language through the conflation of the self with the pronoun or signifier 'I'. Language, in seeming to give its subjects a means of asserting their identities, in actual fact 'governs them despotically by engulfing individuality in the black hole of an impersonal order' (Cavallero 2003:30). The conceptual image of the self that the subject fashions at this juncture is thus founded on alienation—on the individual's subjection to an impersonal order of signs. The identification of the self in both the mirror stage and in the entry into the Symbolic is achieved via the phenomenon of displacement, an aspect I will return to shortly. The infant's identification with an unreal, albeit pleasing totality in the mirror stage prefigures the ego's 'alienating destination', namely its subjection to the disembodied signs or 'phantoms' of the Symbolic order; it is this that leads Lacan to claim that 'I identify myself in language but only by losing myself in it like an object' (1977:86).

III. The 'Name-of-the-Father': Gendered Divisions of the Self

Lacan's theory proposes that the movement of the child into the Symbolic is provoked through the law of the 'name-of-the-father' (*'nom-du-père'*; 1977:73–74),¹¹ and this concept constitutes the Lacanian equivalent of the Freudian Oedipal crisis where a male child's father intervenes to break up the archaic mother/child dyad, prohibiting (sexual)

¹¹ See also 1977: 220–221, 240–241, 343–344, 347–348.

access to her. The patrilineal and androcentric tenor of the Oedipal event as Freud explains it is clear: the male child perceives his father as an unconquerable rival for his mother's affections who threatens to castrate the young boy if he should fail to renounce his claim on the mother. Subsequent to the identification of the child with its father, the boy's desire for his mother is repressed and this repression produces the contents of the unconscious. However, the renunciation of the mother is merely deferred rather than final; the boy and his father negotiate a 'pact' on the basis that ensures that in future the boy will be rewarded for his compliance by being able to secure a woman of his 'own'.¹²

The implication of the agreement between the boy and his father is, as Grosz notes, that it

found patriarchy anew for each generation, guaranteeing the son a position as heir to the father's position in so far as he takes on the father's attributes. In exchange for sacrificing his relation to the mother, who he now recognizes as 'castrated', the boy identifies with the authority invested in the father.

(1990:68)

A 'metaphoric' relationship between father and son is consequently established: the son is required to become like his father in acquiring the characteristics of authority and masculinity that the father has, while also not being like him—by not desiring the woman that the father desires (*ibid.*). Freud thus claims that the boy, in complying with the father's prohibition, becomes heir to all that is 'rightfully' the father's: 'You ought to be like this (like your father)' but 'You may *not* do all the things that he does; some things are his prerogative' (1923:34).

This is one reason why I believe that patrilinearity, at least as it is conveyed in Freud's account, is the foundation of patriarchy rather than *vice versa* as Grosz would seem to have it; in my view, it is the assumption of a chain of patrilineal inheritance that legitimises the authority of the father as constitutive of the organisation of patriarchy, rather than patrilinearity being a derivative product of patriarchy. I noted above that Freudian theory has been defended as a description rather than a recommendation for

¹² Freud theorises the girl child's relationship to the Oedipal drama as different from, though complementary to that of the boy. Unlike the young boy, the young girl is not compensated for renouncing her mother but rather must acquiesce in her subordination to the father, and by implication all men. Where the male child is threatened by castration, the little girl instead 'discovers' that she is already castrated—she possesses neither a penis nor the power it signifies and so she must abandon her mother to focus her libidinal drives on the father whose power she desires. She must accept, however, that her socially designated role as subordinate to the father/males is inevitable and in so doing conforms to the passive, dependent role that is expected of women in patriarchal societies. Consequently her ego is formed on the basis of the lack, rather than possession of a penis. I will return to discuss the implications of this idea for female subjectivity below.

patriarchy (and by implication, patriliney). However, Freud's Oedipal account, which purports to explain the origins of patriarchy, presupposes that for fathers to have control of women and for sons to be dominated by fathers patriarchy must already exist as an organisational principle of social relations. As Grosz suggests, Freud's claims in this regard can be questioned on the ground that 'One must postulate an earlier "event" at the origin of patriarchy which explains the father's pre-eminent position. *This is less likely to be a parricide than a matricide: the authority of fathers is already symbolic insofar as paternity remains uncertain and requires representation*' (1990:69; my emphasis). As such, the father's intervention in the mother/child dyad marks his appropriation of a prior bond, that of the 'mother's (umbilical) authority over the child' (*ibid.*). The father's authority—his position and his prohibitive role—usurps the corporeal bond between mother and child and replaces it with his non-corporeal authority, and, because it must therefore operate in a symbolic register rather than through blood and matter, it is marked by uncertainty; it is more ephemeral and abstract than the corporeal relationship of mother and child. This symbolic appropriation of anatomical connectedness is in effect a displacement that is subsequently covered over by the edifice of culture—law and society—to render patriliney apparently seamless and continuous. Freud's account, it is worth noting, also conveys a solid notion of causality—it is the father rather than the mother that 'labours' to bring the child into the world (of culture).

Lacan translates Freud's essentially anatomical/biological understanding of this process, maintaining its patrilineal tenor nonetheless, into a linguistic and symbolic register, substituting the 'actual' father of the Freudian model with the 'Imaginary father' which he suggests is later replaced by the 'Symbolic Father' as a 'paternal metaphor', 'the place of the father', 'the name-of-the-father'—in short, a function or position rather than a discrete identity (Minsky 1996:149; Lacan 1982:39). As such, it is not necessarily particular fathers *per se* who 'demand' that the child conform to the social order; the imposition of enculturation can be undertaken by the mother (or in fact any other person), which is why Lacan refers to the father as 'Imaginary'. However, the name-of-the-father privileges a masculine social ordering to which the mother herself is submitted (1977:218) and it is this submission that constitutes her symbolic 'castration'. The implication of Lacan's view here is that all individuals, whether male or female, in conforming to the 'Law' necessarily take up a masculine speaking position, as I will discuss below. The 'name-of-the-father', for Lacan, represents the place of authority and

law in society as a system of nomenclatures or kinship wherein the child is prohibited from sexual access to those identified—named—as family. As Grosz suggests, ‘the question of paternity is in fact a matter of *naming*, of the Father’s Name, not his blood’ (1990:70), which requires that the child submits to its norms of behaviour and identifications. As such, as Lacan notes, ‘It is the *name-of-the-father* that we must recognise as the support of the symbolic function, which, from the dawn of history has identified his person with the figure of the law’ (1977:67). It is worth noting here, therefore, that a fundamental feature of patriliney is the inheritance of a name—the name of the father—and it is the name that secures one’s location within

In Lacan’s version of the Oedipal crisis, the child has to sacrifice its desire for its mother (who symbolises, as I have discussed, a integrated totality or place of non-differentiation into which the child longs to merge) and internalise the name-of-the-father. It is only by doing so that the child is able to acquire subjectivity (in that the child is *subjected* to the law, but also is able to take up a position as *subject*, rather than merely an object of discourse). The name-of-the-father essentially becomes a substitution or compensation for the loss of the mother by endowing the child with an illusory sense of wholeness secured through language. As David Crownfield suggests, like the substitution of other gratifications for the desire of the mother, the ‘positional logic of substitution, of representing one thing by another, of displacing desire along a chain of representatives, is the foundation of the formal order of language, of what Lacan calls the symbolic order’ (1992:xiii). That is to say, language itself is a system of substitutions where signifiers stand in for signifieds and appear to constitute a coherent and whole order of meaning. Lacan suggests that it is primarily language and other systems of coherent representation that symbolise the intrusion by cultural regulation into the fused, corporeal world of the mother and child, and sever the child forever from its object of desire. The law of the name-of-the-father, of what meanings and relations are permitted in language, takes up the space left empty by the sacrifice of the mother. Language as a system of differences, and therefore as the opposite of the non-differentiation of the Real, represents the cutting off (castration) of the child from its fantasies of fusion with the mother.

Entry into language is thus predicated on the ability to recognise difference—between oneself and others, but also, simultaneously, between masculinity and femininity, maleness and femaleness. Lacan argues that sexual difference is produced in and by language insofar as language places individuals within a differentiated sexual

economy as women and men; and in so suggesting he connects sexuality and sexual difference to the Symbolic world of language. At the same time as a child begins to recognise sexual difference it also acquires language, and it is the discovery of language that conveys to the child the recognition that the units of language—signs—secure their meaning through their difference from other units. Moreover, it learns that the signifiers of language can stand in for things that are absent, insofar as words are representations—operating like metaphors—of objects (Minsky 1996:151).

For Lacan, sexual difference is an arbitrary construction predicated on the concept of the Phallus as a central, primary, and singular signifier; Lacan refers to it as the ‘signifier of signifiers’ (1977:104), the first sign that a child recognises and whose meaning will henceforth enable the child to negotiate all the other meanings that are symbolised in language. It is both the signifier of (sexual) difference and the signifier that appears to efface lack and therefore, paradoxically, difference (Grosz 1990:117), an aspect that Leclaire recognises when he suggests that the Phallus ‘is a copula, a hyphen—in the evanescence of its erection—the signifier par excellence of impossible identity’ (in Lemaire 1977:86). The Phallus in Lacanian terms appears, therefore, simultaneously to signify presence and absence, as well as wholeness and singularity; as an image of totality and singularity it becomes the object of desire for all individuals and a substitution for the original unity with the mother.¹³ The recognition of the paradoxically divisionary and unificatory power of the phallic signifier within the context of the fear of castration—recognised and made significant by the obvious visibility of the penis as the only sign of significant difference between the young girl and boy—facilitates the acquisition of language by operating in the same symbolic way.¹⁴ By means of this joint entry into language and at the same time sexual ordering and identity, the small child gains an identity and becomes an individual capable of identifying with (seeing itself reflected in) the singular ‘I’ of language. The child thus discovers a conception of a gendered self within language and it then identifies with the sense of coherence and self that this conception imparts, just as it did with its image in

¹³ Luce Irigaray has provided a stinging criticism of Lacan’s privileging of the Phallus on the basis of its analogy to the penis and for presenting it in terms of singularity. She suggests that women are the ‘Sex which is not one’, using the analogy of female genitalia to suggest that ‘woman’ does not conform to the logic of singular identity, sexuality, desire. ‘Woman’ is thus the sex which is more than one and therefore excessive to singularity. Although Irigaray’s work in this regard is, alongside the work of Kristeva, a profound challenge to the phallic economy that Lacan assumes, for reasons of space I am unable to discuss her work here further. See Irigaray 1985a; 1985b.

¹⁴ However, for reasons I will discuss below, the penis and the Phallus are by no means identical in Lacanian thought.

the mirror stage. However, although both male and female children enter the Symbolic in this way, Lacan's theory suggests that only boys appear to become human subjects, because the apparently gender-neutral 'I' and the Phallus on which it is based is associated with the male body. Women as such become the excluded other, figured as lacking the tangible sign of a masculine subject position. As Grosz suggests, 'The symbolic function of the phallus envelops the penis as the tangible sign of a privileged masculinity, thus in effect naturalizing male dominance' (1990:123). I will return below to discuss the (fairly obvious) problems this idea presents.

The entry into the Symbolic, inaugurated by the law of the name-of-the-father and the installation of the Phallus as the primary signifier, produces a constitutive sense of lack which is translated into desire. As Minsky puts it,

[Desire is] the searching movement of language, an endless appeal to the Other for the meaning to end all meaning. Having lost access to the mother's body during the Oedipal crisis we are, henceforth, caught up in a constant search for linguistic substitutes for it, words with which we try to paper over the cracks, plug the gaps at the core of our being, never able to regain the paradise of unity and self-completion which we phantasised with our mothers in the Imaginary.

(1996:147)

Desire is thus essentially displaced and repressed need/demand in that it too seeks totality. However, desire is an extension beyond need and demand although it contains elements of both (Lacan 1977:287). While the basis of need, demand, and desire is the same—the result of the absence or privation of, and then longing for, plenitude—desire is different to the extent that it goes beyond conscious articulation; it is necessarily repressed in the aftermath of the Oedipal event and as such is one of the constitutive elements of the unconscious. Demand attempts to guarantee the ego its self-certainty and self-knowledge and is directed consciously towards others who can either comply with or refuse to satisfy it. It is therefore situated within an interpersonal and familial framework that is prefatory to morality and the norms that determine the social order into which the child is to be inaugurated. Demand inducts the child into the categories and terms of discourse, because the child is forced to acknowledge the facticity of otherness, but demand is unable to provide the child with a stable enunciative identity—as a speaker or discursive/socialised 'I'. This is something that only language—and desire—can do. As Grosz suggests, demand is 'protosocial, for the other is the child's first point of access to the social' (1990:65). Desire, on the other hand, is essentially antisocial; 'it cares little for social approval or the rewards and punishments consciousness offers to demand' (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, it is desire that regulates and marks

the entry of the child into the Symbolic order of language and it achieves this through the mechanism of repression.

Lacan establishes his conception of desire via Hegel's *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1979) in which he (Hegel) equates desire to lack or absence (Grosz 1990:64). Desire, for Lacan, signifies a fundamental lack in the subject that can only be assuaged by another's (particularly the mother's) desire—as the self-conscious ego desires to be desired *by* and to be the desire *of* the other (1977:264). Desire is therefore always an effect of the Other, an 'other' with whom it cannot engage, insofar as the Other is not a person but the locus of law, language, and the Symbolic. A child must find his or her place within this order to become both an enunciative subject and a subject of enunciation. Together the law, language, and the Symbolic serve to locate the subject as split and divided. Desire is thus an effect of language and the unconscious. The lack that characterises desire is based on the lack conditioning the chain of signification which Saussure defined as *langue*, the general structure of language as a system of differences and deferrals. Desire is the reality of the unconscious, the way in which the unconscious and (repressed) sexuality become coextensive.

What emerges from these differentiated relations to the Phallus in terms of gender, is a contradictory image of the Phallus. On the one hand it is the Symbolic representation of wholeness—redolent of the Real—predicated on its appearance (defined against the feminine 'castrated' body) of not 'lacking'; it is a visible marker of presence. However, while the Phallus appears to signal wholeness in that it represents 'not lacking', it also entails, as part of its meaning, exclusion and absence, particularly the absence of the mother. The Phallus thus represents the moment when the father's prohibition of the child's desire for the mother must function, signalling to the child that having a viable, socialised identity can only be achieved at the cost of unity with the mother and that being a subject is only possible as a direct consequence of division (Lacan 1982:40)—between subject and object, alignment with the father against the mother, and between the conscious and unconscious. So, as well as wholeness, the Phallus also signifies a division—like the Father, the Symbolic, and language. It is for this reason that the Father, the Symbolic, the Other, and the Phallus are interchangeable in Lacan's schema—they each represent a 'third' term that intervenes in the mother/child dyad and breaks it up. As Minsky suggests, the 'recognition of the phallus as a sign of difference' has the 'power to shatter the child's relationship with the mother [which] allows the child to enter into the cultural system of meaning containing other

signs based on difference, language' (1996:152). The third term which separates the child from its mother is therefore at the same time both the father (as name or structural Other) *and* the cultural meanings that pre-exist the child in language. Both acquire their meaning through the operation of difference and impose limits to the child's phantasies. They effect a symbolic castration, in other words, by dividing the child from what it most desires; but simultaneously they ensure that the child becomes an autonomous subject in language.

The Phallus does not, however, wholly succeed in extinguishing the child's longing for totality, and this fact ensures the conversion of the child's needs and demands into desire which, like demand, can never be satisfied because once the child has separated from its mother, no return to the original unity is possible if it is to be able to function as a separate, autonomous being, the very prerequisite of sociality. Desire, like language, is consequently endlessly deferred, and it is this that becomes the motivating principle of human life and occasions the genesis of the unconscious—which Lacan suggests is structured like a language (1977:234)—as the ensemble of longings, fantasies and fears which language cannot and will not allow to be articulated. Lacan, like Derrida, argues that the production of meaning—most importantly the meaning of the self—is a forever deferred process, because any signifier will always require other signifiers to support its tentative claim to meaning in a limitless proliferation of possible links (1977:153).¹⁵

However, as I have already stated, Lacan claims that it is only males who are able to assert a subjectivity that is seemingly fixed, autonomous, and whole, on the basis that they are able more easily than women to identify with the Phallus. It is this idea in particular that has led many feminists to reject Lacan's psychoanalytic model as one that replicates and strengthens patriarchal values by assigning femininity as a sign of lack and negativity. However, I want to suggest that Lacan's analysis of the phallic signifier, for all its deeply problematic implications for female subjectivity—some of which I

¹⁵ As such, the recognition of an 'I' depends on an unconscious recognition of the principles of difference, exclusion, and absence that are the basis of ordered language but these are effaced in the conscious in order to render the 'I' seemingly as a place of wholeness, autonomy, and presence. Reversing Descartes' *cogito* Lacan claims that 'I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think' (1977:166). He derives this claim through recourse to the structural linguistics of Saussure but also to Freud's account of the two main mechanisms of unconscious processes, condensation and displacement (Freud 1953–1974, IV–V). For Lacan, both are essentially linguistic phenomena, where meaning is either condensed (in metaphor) or displaced (in metonymy). Lacan suggests that the contents of the unconscious are acutely aware of language, and particularly of the structure of language as predicated on difference. See Grosz 1990:82–114.

touch on below—at the very least offers a means of understanding the basis of language as predicated on values of absence and presence that are then invested with discursive, ontological, and mythical significance. Where Freud construed the anatomical penis as a guarantor of sexual difference, Lacan suggests instead that this difference is produced by an abstracted distinction between *having* and *being*, insofar as masculinity might appear to *possess* the Phallus, whereas femininity might appear to *be* the Phallus:

[O]ne may, simply by reference to the function of the phallus, indicate the structures that will govern the relations between the sexes. Let us say that these relations will turn around a 'to be' [*être*] and a 'to have' [*avoir*], which, by referring to a signifier, the phallus, have the opposed effect, on the one hand, of giving reality to the subject in this signifier, and on the other, of derealizing the relations to the signified.

(1977:289)

Through the Phallus, each sex is positioned as a speaking subject, ('giving reality to the subject'); through the Phallus, the reality of anatomical sex is merely the significance and values that a culture gives to anatomy ('derealizing the relations of the signified'). Within the logic of the differential nature of language (as a system of signifiers and signifieds) the man can be affirmed as phallic only to the extent that there is an other who desires (and therefore lacks) what he 'has'. But what of his own desire? Lacan suggests that, because the Phallus is the signifier of desire (for totality/unity) men conflate women with the Phallus insofar as they 'desire' women. As Cavallero suggests, in this schema

male subjects are expected—by the patriarchal system governed by masculine discourse—to own that attribute as the *ultimate signifier* of paternal authority, while female subjects, deemed incapable of such ownership, are expected to embody that signifier for the benefit of others, to incarnate the ultimate symbol of erotic gratification.

(2003:31; my emphasis)

However, Lacan insists that the suggestion that boys possess the Phallus is, like the conflation of the child with its image in the mirror stage, based on a misrecognition and a misidentification. The significance granted to the possession of the Phallus, via its conflation with the actual penis, is, in many respects, spurious because no one can actually possess it. The penis takes on the function of the Phallus only because it is an organ that is able to signify possession/presence rather than dispossession/absence.¹⁶ Thus the penis becomes, in Lacanian terms, an imaginary object that divides the sexes on the basis of its presence or absence—possessed by some, desired by others. It can

¹⁶ The identification of the penis as a sign of presence is itself based on a set of unjustifiable and partisan assumptions. The penis as presence is, effectively, an interpretation, and a specious one at that.

subsequently function as a symbolic object (an object of exchange or union) between the sexes. By implication, therefore, because the Phallus signifies both division and unity, the penis (as imaginary or symbolic Phallus) is not the only 'object' that is able to serve as the Phallus' metonym. Thus one would expect that in different socio-political structures the chain of signifiers in which the Phallus finds its context must vary historically, and indeed Lacan occasionally affirms that the Phallus as a signifier is not immutably conflated with the penis:

The phallus is not a question of a form or of an image, or of a phantasy, but rather a signifier, the signifier of desire. In Greek antiquity, the phallus is not represented by an organ but as an insignia.

(in Wilden 1981:187)

This is because, as a signifier (of difference, desire, totality) rather than an organ, no individual has a privileged relationship to the Phallus. As Grosz observes,

the penis...is not a *representation* or sign of the phallus [because] this would relegate the phallic signifier to the barred position of signified [and] would create two parallel orders—organic and symbolic—that are only externally, not constitutively, connected. The signifier is active in giving meaning and value to the organ....The penis...does not have the sole right of alignment with the phallus. Not only does the penis act as if it were the 'meaning of the phallus', a series of substitute objects are also capable of taking on this function....The penis, as imaginary object is *already* bound up with signification. It is itself already a signifier, and as such, can function as a *metonymic displacement* of the phallus.

(1990:119)

Although identification with the Phallus is the product of a misrecognition, Lacan believes that it is a necessary one in order for the individual to acquire subjectivity. As Minsky argues, 'Language [as represented by the Phallus]...both forces the abandonment of the full, passionate world of the Imaginary, but it is also the best source of identification the child has had yet apart from the mother' (1996:153). For Lacan, the Phallus seems to offer the only possibility of stalling or repressing the individual's endless longing and yearning for completion, for the lost object of its desire. The Phallus thus functions as a structural concept which, as a signifier of difference *and* of unity, appears to be an absolute guarantor of all meaning within language.

Lacan suggests that the acquisition of (gendered) identity is achieved at a devastating cost for both male and females and that ultimately both emerge as marked by and as lack(ing). The male child is figured as lack because the taking up of a male subject position requires the sacrifice of the mother and submission to the law of the father who retains the mother for himself, an act Lacan argues constitutes a symbolic castration (Minsky 1990:153). Thus, the actual meaning of the Phallus is not power and totality, but rather powerlessness and lack—the male child is constituted against the

Phallus as lacking (the desire of his mother). Similarly, the young girl's acquisition of her gendered identity is costly—even more so than the boy's—in that it requires the acceptance of her identity as lacking what her mother wants and therefore what marks cultural identity and power, namely the law-of-the-father. The qualitative difference between the young girl and boy is that the girl, as lack, is constituted as a site of negativity; although both genders lose the fusion with the mother's body, the girl additionally loses any sense of the legitimacy and wholeness of her own body because she lacks any straightforward possibility of identification with the legitimising primary signifier, the Phallus.

The significance of Lacan's presentation of feminine subjectivity in this regard is that girls enter language 'negatively' insofar as they 'lack' the sign and guarantor of subjectivity. A girl enters a Symbolic order that defines her as 'other' rather than as a subject in her own right. Thus, as Minsky points out, '*Having* [a relationship to the Phallus] becomes the requirement for *being*, for a viable identity' (1996:159). Lacan suggests that the only means through which a female can obtain a relationship to the Phallus is by 'being' the Phallus for males, that is, by being what the Phallus needs and signifies—a substitute for the mother. As Minsky puts it

By doing this she also allows men to feel themselves to be the objects of *her* Desire. And this fulfils the vital patriarchal requirement of bolstering men's identity—their sense of potency and phallic power which cannot be sustained without women.

(*ibid.*)

This phallic power cannot be sustained without women because in the economy of difference which is the basis of signification—and in which the categories of woman and man are dependent on each other for their coherence—'woman' constituted as other, as lacking, enables the construal of 'man' as whole. Thus, as Moi observes, 'woman as defective becomes a defence against the thinking male subject's potentially devastating insight into his own lack' (1989b:195). Women are necessarily reduced to a projection of male lack within the (patriarchal) Symbolic order, leading Lacan to suggest that the term 'woman' has no meaning, she does not exist: 'There is no such thing as ~~The~~ Woman...there is woman only as excluded by the nature of things which is the nature of words' (Lacan 1982:144). She is subjected in language only to become a passive receptacle of male projections. Thus, when men fall in love with women, in reality they are only responding narcissistically to projections of themselves and as such women become merely the symptom and receptacle of men's lack. Woman as 'nothing', as the site of men's unconscious projections, allows men, in contrast, to look like 'something'—

positive, whole, potent, and meaningful. Cavallero explains this well when she suggests that

this dialectic of desire rests on a mendacious imposture: it endeavours to efface the male subject's own constitutive lack, a universal concomitant of every individual's absorption into the Symbolic, while simultaneously concealing the female subject's self-dispossession: the fact that when woman is cast in a phallic role, she is not valued for herself but as a specious construct, a character in a masquerade....Although men possess the penis and women do not, no one in fact possesses the Phallus—because this denotes proprietorship of an absolute power which the Symbolic simply denies—or embodies it, since no human being is in a position to fulfil totally another's desire.

(2003:31)

Lacan suggests that women respond to the fact that femininity is constructed only with reference to the male sign—the Phallus—by complying with the role they are assigned, but that this is effectively a masquerade. What society construes as 'natural' feminine behaviour is in fact an elaborate (unconscious) performance of what patriarchal (and by implication, heterosexual) society demands of women. Thus, while women are able to represent male phantasies, they can only exist as subjects to the extent that they can align themselves with the demands of the patriarchal social order which in effect means adopting a masculine speaking position. However, in the Symbolic order where no one in fact has a whole and stable identity, women represent a double lack—they lack the Phallus, and are a projection or symbol of male lack that is produced by men's symbolic castration.

Such an equation seems to destine women and men to inequitable relations forever, and to place women at a distinct disadvantage, as the empty or lacking container of men's phantasies. However, Lacan's stresses that the Phallus only appears to be whole and powerful because it has value as the primary (and universal) signifier. Signifiers are themselves arbitrary—they lack any value in themselves—and so the Phallus as signifier necessarily lacks any transcendent basis either for its singular power or its primary status. Nonetheless, its speciousness, Lacan argues, is transferred to all other signifiers: 'The phallus, in provoking the chain of meanings "having" and "not having", positive and negative, power and lack, "masculinity" and "femininity", opens the way to the meanings of all other signifiers' (Minsky 1996:160).

Jantzen takes issue with Lacan's claim that the Phallus is a universal signifier—and that the Symbolic order is necessarily 'phallogentric'—by using Lacan's own

presentation of the logic of signification to undermine his elevation of the phallic signifier:¹⁷

There is not, and there cannot be, any single term which is itself fixed and which grounds every other term. All terms, as signifiers, signify in relation to the shifting range of other terms in relation to which they are to be understood, not as fixed or grounded in actual need, but in relation to other desires and deferrals....In this shifting play of signifiers, no one signifier can be a constant. This is as true of the term 'Phallus' as of any other. To affirm that it is universal would be to undermine the whole account of language and the unconscious which Lacan has painstakingly built up. He cannot have it both ways.

(1998:52)

She goes on to suggest that while the Phallus cannot be a universal signifier, one can recognise that it has been a dominant one and this very fact means that it 'can be resisted and perhaps dislodged' (*ibid.*). A further implication of the instability of the phallic signifier, therefore, is that if the Phallus is false and arbitrary, all the other oppositions that are modelled on it must be as well—the division and valuations of 'masculinity' and 'femininity', 'power' and 'lack', 'having' and 'not having' are brought into question and open to reconfiguration. Male identity as 'power' might thus be rendered as actually groundless.

This would seem to suggest that the meaning and identity of women might be more solidly based or, at the very least, differently directed than those of men, and, strikingly, throughout the entirety of Lacan's work, he never brings the mother (as woman), as the one who inspires all desire, into question. The desire for reunion with the mother is what drives language, and it might be woman-as-mother, therefore, who is able to produce the dislocations, subversions, and openings that reveal the coherency and stability of language to be illusory (I will return to assess this possibility in detail in the following chapter). While women may 'lack' the Phallus and although their sexuality is apparently circumscribed within the order of masculine phantasy, Lacan does suggest that women's identities may be based on 'something else' (although it is 'something' that is repressed and silent). Lacan, albeit belatedly and inadequately, thus tries to theorise a more 'positive' role for women through his concept of *jouissance* to suggest a form of sexual pleasure and identification particular to them. He suggests, therefore, in one of his more objectionable statements, that

¹⁷ Ragland-Sullivan defends Lacan against the charge of 'phallocentrism' in terms that recall Mitchell's defence of Freud by stating that 'Lacan discovered the phallic signifier, its effects and the resulting structure of substitutive Desire. These intrinsically neutral elements give rise to ideologies of the masculine and feminine that cluster around the male-female difference and dramatize themselves in a parade' (1986:298). In my view, however, Jantzen offers a more convincing analysis.

There is woman only as excluded by the nature of things which is the nature of words, and it has to be said that if there is one thing they themselves are complaining about enough at the moment, it is well and truly that—only they don't know what they are saying, which is all the difference between them and me. It nonetheless remains that if she is excluded by the nature of things, it is precisely that in being not at all, she has, in relation to what the phallic function designates of *jouissance*, a supplementary *jouissance*.

(1982:144)

He describes *jouissance* as an indefinable, unrepresentable 'something more'; it is what escapes, or is left over from, or exceeds the phallic function (Lacan 1982:147). Here he seems to refer to other forms of pleasure and identifications that cannot be and are not absorbed into the phallic orientations that mark the Symbolic order. These are the sources of pleasure which, like the unconscious meanings which exist between words, lie beyond the reach and meaning of heterosexual physical satisfaction based on the Phallus and are perhaps those forms of pleasure which are associated with the search for an alternative identity through the re-union with the mother. Lacan infamously—at least in feminist circles—offers Bernini's statue of St Theresa as an example of a woman's *jouissance* that operates entirely separate from the phallic realm of language (and knowledge) and uses it to suggest that women, lacking the capacity (the 'having') necessary for the phallic function, instead have access to a greater capacity for undulating and excessive sexual diversity such as that expressed in St Teresa's apparent mystically inspired orgasm:

You only have to go and look at Bernini's statue to understand immediately that she's coming, there is no doubt about it. And what is her *jouissance*, her *coming* from? It is clear that the essential testimony of the mystics is that they are experiencing it but know nothing about it.

(Lacan 1982:147)

However, he conflates the 'silence' (the 'not knowing') of the statue with women's silence regarding their *jouissance* when he states, having earlier begged women to tell him in what their *jouissance* consists (1982:146), 'There is a *jouissance* proper to her...which does not exist and which signifies nothing. There is a *jouissance* proper to her and of which she herself may know nothing, except that she experiences it' (*ibid.*).

It is thus unclear from Lacan's discussion whether *jouissance* is in itself unknowable, or whether it is something that women cannot know (Grosz 1990:139). It seems likely that Lacan here theorises a female *jouissance* beyond the Phallus on the basis of his own voyeuristic gaze; perhaps he does so for the reason, as Jantzen points out, that he is able to '[link] together mysticism, female sexuality, and ignorance on the one hand, and masculinity, rationality, and the scientific gaze on the other, rejecting the subjectivity or possibility of language of Teresa herself' (1996:53). Luce Irigaray

recognises this and mocks Lacan for his treatment of Teresa, taking him to task for failing to recognise that his description of Teresa might in fact be his own projection, asking pointedly 'In Rome? So far away? To look? At a statue? Of a saint? Sculpted by a man? What pleasure are we talking about? Whose pleasure? For where the pleasure of the Theresa is concerned, her own writings are more telling' (1985:91). If Lacan wants women to tell him in what their pleasure consists, he seems unprepared either to hear or to read what they have to say. As Grosz suggests, 'The absence of an answer from women is clearly itself an answer—that this is a problem for men who want to know, to master, to name, that which is not theirs' (1990:146).

However, for all the weaknesses in Lacan's account, he does offer a description of how and why women *qua* women are both contained within and marginalised from male fantasies of wholeness, unity, singularity; as such his work has a good deal of value for demonstrating the mechanisms by which women are subordinated and excluded within patriarchal systems. It further offers an insight into the fragile basis on which a patrilineal economy must operate to exclude difference and elevate singularity to the 'truth' of subjectivity. Thus the patrilineal valuation of paternal and phallic singularity as a metonymic device tries to substitute an original but forever lost wholeness with the compensatory fiction of masculine subjectivity. Patrilinearity substitutes corporeal bonds with what is, in reality, an unsatisfying impersonal law of signification and the name-of-the-father. Lacan reveals this valuation to be fundamentally a fiction, one that requires the vigilant patrolling of its borders to maintain its stability but which is always threatened by otherness, by the lack that is at the heart of the subject, whether represented by women, language, or the unconscious. Thus Lacan reveals patrilinearity to be a mechanism that endlessly struggles to obscure its fragility by displacing otherness as difference and distilling identity into singularity, an aspect that goes some way, in my view, to explaining the paradox of subject formation.

I would also suggest that his work offers a heuristic tool for understanding the German search for origins discussed throughout the thesis. I have shown that this search was undertaken with a view to finding in the past an image and a place—the *Urheimat*—of German unity, as one that would restore to the German people a sense of their purity, autochthony, and originality against a traumatic background of the loss of territory and social cohesion. The past in this context was viewed as a mirror, able to reflect back to the German people an image of themselves as cohesive and unified. I have shown, however, like the infant's encounter with its image in the mirror stage, this image itself

was a fiction, a projected fantasy from the present into the past. The image of the past that was ostensibly retrieved through the efforts of the romantic nationalists was thus a product and reflection of the present, marked and determined by a desire to return to the origin. Further, the 'restoration' of German unity relied on a patrilineal model of cultural transmission—traditions handed down from father to son—where paternal provenance was assumed to guarantee the legitimacy and truthfulness of the German character, thus echoing the role played by the paternal metaphor in constituting subjectivity. Finally, the coherency and stability of the German narration of identity was secured through a discourse of differentiation that distilled the diversity of the German people into a singular notion of Germanness and the German territory—the fatherland—as masculine and impermeable, through the construction of Jewishness as the feminine, non-original, and radically other. However, as I showed in Chapter 7, the qualities assigned to the Jewish people were the very qualities that in actual fact defined the German people. 'Other' and 'self' in this context were identical but their similarity was violently obscured and annihilated, again reflecting Lacan's theorisation of femininity as the necessarily excluded other within the Symbolic order—an excess that threatens the stability and coherency of the masculine self.

Thus, where Lacan explains how patriarchal culture transmits and reproduces itself, he also elaborates ways in which it exceeds and contradicts itself. In other words, if he has explained how the law-like functioning of language and the interdictions of the symbolic father constitute the subject as such, he has also indicated the always open, ambiguous, and uncontrollable nature of language, its supra- and trans-subjective status. He shows that language is inherently open to disruptions, new meanings, reinterpretations, recontextualisations that are capable of giving it meaning other than that intended. However, he signally fails to offer an adequate theorisation of women, or feminine *jouissance* in particular, as a possibly non-referential construal which does not operate within the narrow world of its symbolic containment in the binary opposition of male/female as one that is reducible to the logic of the self-same (which, as I have argued, is the marker of patriliney). If he places this feminine *jouissance* beyond the Phallus and thus beyond the symbolic and representable, this is because the symbolic, linguistic structure he describes is necessarily restricted to, and in fact assumes as universal, those dominant discourses and systems which accord women both no place and no identity of their own. Could there be, as Grosz suggests and Jantzen affirms (1996), 'other discourses and forms of possible representation capable of speaking of/as

women differently' (Grosz 1990:146)? In my view, it is Kristeva, more than any other theorist who works within psychoanalytic parameters, who is able to suggest some of the ways in which this might be possible. What she offers, however, is not merely a theorisation of alternative forms of femininity *per se*; rather, she offers several models of identity, particularly one derived from the metaphor of the maternal body, that are extendable and applicable across gender lines. In the final chapter, therefore, I examine the broad thrust of her work before narrowing in to focus on her theories of maternity as a means of escaping the tyranny of the self-same.

CHAPTER TEN

AGAINST SINGULAR ORIGINS: TOWARDS A FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY OF MYTH

This final chapter undertakes a movement towards a feminist philosophy of myth and origins that offers some suggestions for an alternative to the patrilineal logic of identity I have traced throughout the thesis. To do so, I turn to the work of Julia Kristeva who presents a complex and intricate image of identity, like Lacan, as divided and unstable. However, her focus on what is marginalised by psychoanalysis opens a field of questions that enable a questioning of origins and of selves dramatically at odds with the Lacanian account. I begin by outlining the main themes regarding subjectivity—particularly those of the ‘subject-in-process’, dialogism, and the relationship between the two linguistic modalities of the semiotic and the symbolic—in Kristeva’s work and establish its relationship to Lacanian thought. In the second section I examine Kristeva’s concept of the semiotic *chora* and suggest that her theorisation of it as a presymbolic arena of maternal regulation represents an attempt to theorise what might be ‘other’ to the positing of singular origins. Next I examine her theorisation of maternal regulation that precedes and prefigures the paternal interdiction that inaugurates entry into the Symbolic order, and her adjustment of the Lacanian structure of infantile development by means of the concept of abjection (a form of separation that takes place prior to the castration complex and operates in reference to the maternal body). In section (iv) I examine her work on maternity theorised—in contrast to the conventional psychoanalytic adoption of the infant’s perspective—from the point of view of actual mothers. I argue that Kristeva’s theorisation of a maternal economy implies an ethical orientation missing from patrilineal economies of identity and I focus therefore on the maternal body as a model for ethical identity oriented towards otherness with love; I will suggest that the maternal body is a metaphor for divided or split (but never severed) identity where the tension between self and other, sameness and difference is never mastered but always creative and processual. Kristeva suggests that far from being discarded at the beginning of a child’s entry into the realm of culture, the idea of the maternal remains a creatively disruptive force in the form of the ‘semiotic’ and

consequently poses an unmasterable challenge to the stability and coherency of singular selves that places the self in an agonistic relationship to otherness.

In the final section of the chapter I propose a movement towards a feminist philosophy of myth that incorporates Kristeva's theorisation of the maternal body but extends her work, reading it together with Derrida's work on *différance*, to explore some possible connections between the maternal body, origins, narrativity, and identity. I conclude with a reflection on the implications of these connections for a feminist philosophy of myth. I believe that the maternal body, as a discursively construed 'myth of multiple origins', inscribes a fruitful arena in which the political project of feminism, and indeed other liberatory projects, might find a way of challenging some of the deep structures of thought that have contributed to the marginalisation and exclusion of not only women, but also of the groups and individuals regularly constituted as other to the western normatively masculinised self. I am proposing that a feminist philosophy of myth, mythmaking, and mythology is a critical, political practice engaged in the subversion of singularity and the patrilineal logic of causality and continuity affirmed by 'mainstream' mythology; while the marginality and irresolvable difference of the maternal body have been sites of domination and oppression in western metaphysics, they may also be imaginatively transgressive spaces where the logic of the self-same is resisted, disrupted, and ultimately refused. Identity, place, origin, belonging, and myth (and philosophy) may consequently be reconfigured as an intricately woven network of contingent and transgressive sites of self-constitution that opens a space for an ethical orientation towards otherness.

I. Maternity and Origins: Julia Kristeva and the Maternal Body

The phenomena which interest me are precisely those that blur the boundaries, cross them, and make their historical artifice appear, also their violence, meaning the relations of force that are concentrated there and actually capitalize themselves there interminably. Those who are sensitive to all the stakes of 'creolization'... assess this better than others.

(Derrida 1998:9)

Kristeva arrived in Paris from Bulgaria to begin graduate study in 1966, the year that Lacan published his *Écrits*. Her doctoral dissertation, published as *La Révolution du Langage Poétique: L'avant-garde à la Fin du XIX^{ème} Siècle* (1974; translated as *Revolution in Poetic Language* in 1984), brought together theoretical concerns with avant-garde literature, the somatic elements of language, borderline psychological states, the nature of public discourse, and the acquisition by children of language. Because of the coincidence between the ideas developed in this work and Lacan's structuralist theories

of infantile development, she became interested in psychoanalysis. Between 1976 and 1979 she trained as a psychoanalyst and has since practiced in Paris whilst holding a chair in linguistics in the Department of Texts and Documents, University of Paris VII and periodically teaching in comparative literature at Columbia University. Her work has subsequently been marked by crossings between disciplines, paradigms, genres, styles, and subject positions. As Marilyn Edelstein observes,

Borders, thresholds, folds, crossroads, crosses—all have been recurrent metaphors of intersection and confluence...in Julia Kristeva's writings. Her work on language, borderline patients, literary limit-texts, the maternal, the abject, and faith is united by an interest in what exists at and beyond those processes through which (subject/object) boundaries are both broached and maintained dialogically and relationally.

(1992:27)

I will argue that these 'crossings' open up a means of dismantling the binary logic of the self-same that I have examined in the previous chapters, and of putting in its place a dialogic frame for subjectivity that crosses back and forth between self and other. I want to examine Kristeva's transgressive body of work precisely as a strategic embodiment of, and argument for, an ethical orientation towards otherness predicated on the image of divided (transgressive) subjectivity identified by Lacan but powerfully re-theorised by Kristeva. I will begin by outlining her conception of the 'subject-in-process' (*sujet en procès*) which demonstrates the dynamic qualities of the divided self and which she examines through images of foreignness, abjection, avant-garde literature and the maternal body. My discussion here leads me to focus on the maternal body as a metaphor for Lacan's notion of the split subject, in order to challenge the patrilineal logic that maintains the self in opposition to the other and posits the father as a non-transcendable origin. The maternal image that Kristeva presents radically reorients the Lacanian split subject towards a model of subjectivity that she refers to as a gendered 'herethics'. I focus on what is for her a stylistically unique essay—'Stabat Mater' (1987b)¹— which examines a number of discourses about motherhood from the western philosophical, religious, and psychoanalytical traditions and simultaneously subverts them with a parallel discourse (and enactment) ostensibly by an actual mother. I pay particular attention to this essay in order to demonstrate, against her critics, that Kristeva's conception of maternity does not succumb to an essentialist and conservative notion of motherhood; rather, 'Stabat Mater' distils many of the themes that characterise her work regarding subjectivity more generally and must be read

¹ Originally published as 'Héretique de l'amour' (1977); renamed 'Stabat Mater' when it was included in Kristeva's *Histoire d'amour* (1983), later translated in English as *Tales of Love* (1987a).

alongside and in dialogue with her notions of the semiotic and the abject as disruptive forces that undermine the singularity of selfhood. I will argue that 'Stabat Mater' does not advocate a didactic model of 'proper' motherhood but instead is an enactment of herethics which endeavours to position its readers as mothers, as split subjects. I conclude the section with an examination of the implications Kristeva's model of maternity for ethical relations with and towards otherness and for challenging the patrilineal prioritisation of singularity. In the next and final section of the chapter I suggest the ways in which Kristeva's theorisation of mothers, the subject-in-process, and the transgression of self/other boundaries might open up a way to reconsider the division between myth and philosophy.

(i) Julia Kristeva on the Subject-in-Process/on-Trial

A central theme that runs throughout Kristeva's oeuvre is that subjectivity is tenuous and processual:

All identities are unstable: the identity of linguistic signs, the identity of meaning and, as a result the identity of the speaker. And in order to take account of this destabilization of meaning and of the subject I thought the term 'subject in process' would be appropriate. Process in the sense of process but also in the sense of a legal proceeding where the subject is committed to trial, because our identities in life are constantly called into question, brought to trial, over-ruled.

(Kristeva and Sellers 1989:19)

She derives her thinking about subjectivity in this regard from the Lacanian claim that the subject is essentially a product of language and as such is subjected to the laws that govern the Symbolic order, and also from her early work in the field of semiotics which was substantially influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin and Roland Barthes. Bakhtin in particular, suggested a dialogic model of human communication and subjectivity (based on analyses of the structure of novels) that Kristeva uses to good effect to understand the constitution of the self by analogy with textual signification unfolding as a process rather than packaged as a completed product bearing the signature of a single author (see Lechte and Margaroni 2004:7). For Bakhtin, the human subject is neither autonomous nor transcendent as suggested by the Cartesian *cogito*; rather it is produced as an effect of (and in the process of) the interactions and communications (the dialogue) between individuals:

In reality the relations between A and B are in a state of permanent formation and transformation; they continue to alter in the very process of communication. Nor is there a ready-made message X. It takes form in the process of communication between A and B. Nor is it transmitted from the first to the second, but constructed between them, like an ideological bridge; it is constructed in the process of their interaction.

Kristeva recognises the similarity between Bakhtin's conception of dialogic subjectivity and Lacan's divided self and weaves their work together to offer an expansive theory of the relationship between sign systems—language, visual images, gestures, music, body posture, and so on—and human subjectivity. In 'Word, Dialogue and Novel' (1977a:64–91) Kristeva observes that Bakhtin shows how dialogism is 'inherent in language itself' (1977a:68) and that it signals 'another logic...the logic of distance and relationship...indicating a *becoming*—in opposition to the level of continuity and substance, both of which obey the logic of *being* and are thus monological'. 'Becoming' here signifies a fluid and ongoing process of subjectification whereas 'being' signifies closure and completeness. Kristeva thus suggests that dialogism offers an alternative to dualist systems of thought as represented by Hegelian dialectics, for example (see also Clark and Holquist 1984:7), or the logic of the self-same. Dialogism is thus an 'other logic' of 'analogy and nonexclusive opposition, opposed to monological levels of causality and identifying determination' (1977a:71–72; see also 1977a:74). In differentiating the dialogic from the dialectic, Kristeva wants to replace an oppositional schema with a concept of 'relation' which does not 'strive towards transcendence but rather toward harmony, all the while implying an idea of rupture...as a modality of transformation' (1977a:88–9). This idea underlies all her work on borderline states and on the interdependence of seemingly oppositional categories such as self/other, inside/outside, father/mother, and mind/body.

Kristeva's work seeks, therefore, to develop models that can respond to and exemplify a dialogic system of thought. She does so as part of an ethical project of resisting what she defines as 'totalitarian' social systems which seek to banish otherness from the scene of subjectivity and to consolidate subjectivity as monologic. Her work on foreignness and abjection (see 1991; 1982) demonstrates her concern to recuperate the marginalised heterogeneity of subjectivity that is effaced by monologism. She uses semiotic analysis to demonstrate, for example, that the idea of a stable and transcendent sign system that is privileged by western metaphysics—of language as a complete and objective medium of communication—is a fiction that bolsters subjectivity as monologic and homogenous and thus secures ideological stability but that also serves to maintain the interests of particular groups at the expense of others.² Instead she suggests the

² She contrasts monological texts (epics, myths, and folktales), for example—which in her view, promote single ideologies aimed at conveying a stable reality of officially sanctioned ideas

necessity of developing theoretical tools that enable the identification of aporias, lacunae, and heterogeneity in language where stable meaning disintegrates (and thus the clarity of oppositional thought is disturbed) and where sign systems can no longer function as the singular and simple guarantors of order. She sees this as an ethical project, of aligning ethics with sites of negativity—of all that is marginalised or effaced by singularity—in order to challenge the binary logic that places the other as inimical to the self. Indeed, Kristeva has stated that she is interested in discourses that disintegrate forms of identity as self-same, monological, and transcendent—because she is a woman (a site of negativity) and her work consequently ‘obeys ethical exigencies’ (in Marks and Courtivron 1981:138; see also Oliver 1993a:1).

Kristeva thus suggests that semioticians shift their focus from the analysis of meaning (‘signifiante’)—the forms of interpretation—to the signifying process, using a critical method which she calls *semanalysis* (1986:28; see also Oliver 1993b:91–113). Her early work is marked by a concern to challenge structuralist theories of language insofar as they appear to render the (speaking) subject transcendental, ahistorical, and unitary by analogy with the seemingly static structure of language (1986:27; 1984:24; 1977a:124). She puts the Cartesian, phenomenological, and structuralist models of subjectivity ‘on trial’ and finds them wanting. She suggests that the possibility of a subject creating meaning—speaking—relies on a process prior to signification and that the theorisation of unitary subjectivity is unable to account for this anteriority. This anteriority, for Kristeva, is revealed in aspects of language (such as intonation, musicality, rhythm, and echolalia) that do not signify within syntactic regulation, and she points to Freud as the theorist who recognises this anteriority as located in the unconscious which is able to disrupt intended and present meaning (1986:83). *Semanalysis* thus combines linguistics with psychoanalytical theory in order to pay attention to the heterogeneous elements—linguistic and non-linguistic—of the signifying process rather than to the totality of sign systems themselves.

For Kristeva, subjectivity is a form of intertextuality where human beings, like texts, are signs of the intersection of multiple voices; they are multi-layered and plural. She introduces Bakhtin’s concept of intertextuality³ to refer to a particular kind of

according to a fixed repertoire of symbols—to dialogical texts such as avant-garde novels which invoke polyphony, transgress conventions, and present images of reality as inexorably fleeting and in flux (1977a:47–59).

³ Kristeva derives the notion of ‘intertextuality’ from Bakhtin although she is often attributed with having coined it (Edelstein 1992:31–32).

textual history, one that is able to trace the citational influences and derivations of texts as they encounter others: 'any text is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another' (1986:37). In suggesting that subjectivity is intertextual she aims to challenge the phenomenological and structuralist division between subject and object (and, by extension, consciousness and corporeality) in order to transform the basis on which subjectivity and language can be conceived. As Oliver suggests,

Semanalysis uses intertextuality in order to transform meanings. It alters the positions of enunciation and denotation, the positions from which the subject speaks as well as what it speaks about. And, by so doing, semanalysis points to a shifting subject position, a subject in transformation, a 'subject-in-process/on trial'.

(1993b:93)

Kristeva is at pains to stress the transformative aspects of the intertextual elements of subjectivity and of language. While she accepts the Saussurean claim that the relationship between signifiers and signifieds is arbitrary she emphasises that the speaking subject creates the connection between them and that the relationship between subjects and signification is marked by heterogeneity. One of the most distinctive ways in which she theorises the material, heterogeneous aspects of language is through her reconfiguration of Lacan's tripartite model of infantile development in order to challenge its temporal linearity and to theorise, more adequately than Lacan does, the processual nature of subjectivity by building in the dialogic quality of body and mind. She thus develops a theory of two distinct linguistic modalities, the 'semiotic'⁴ and the 'symbolic', that characterise both subjectivity and signification (see Anne-Marie Smith (1998:15).

For Kristeva, like Lacan, the 'symbolic' is the realm of language and culture, the law of the Father. Her concept of the 'semiotic'—which has no precise parallel in Lacan's three-part scheme of Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real—is the realm of the body, drives, and the unconscious. Kristeva invites her readers to interrogate the endemic assumptions that language, as an abstract system, can produce unified, rational subjects and that syntax, in particular, serves to stabilise language by subjecting expression to relatively inflexible rules. To facilitate this interrogation, Kristeva posits an ongoing creative tension between the semiotic and the symbolic:

⁴ Kristeva makes a distinction between 'semiotics' (*la semiotique*) as the study of signifying systems and the semiotic (*le semiotique*) as the non-syntactical element of language which is clearer in French.

What I call 'the semiotic' takes us back to the pre-linguistic states of childhood where the child babbles the sounds s/he hears, or where s/he articulates rhythms, alliterations, or stresses, trying to imitate his/her surroundings. In this state, the child doesn't yet possess the necessary linguistic signs and thus there is no meaning in the strict sense of the term. It is only after the mirror phase of the experience of castration in the Oedipus complex that the individual becomes subjectively capable of taking on the signs of language, of articulation as it has been prescribed—and I call that 'the symbolic'.

(Kristeva and Sellers 1989:19)

For Kristeva, the semiotic 'logically and chronologically precedes the establishment of the symbolic and its subject' (1984:41) and yet symbolic and semiotic permanently and dynamically co-exist in the subject and in language: 'Since the subject is always both semiotic and symbolic, any signifying system he/she produces is never "exclusively" symbolic, but necessarily marked by a debt to the other modality' (1984:22).

Kristeva's introduction of the concept of the 'semiotic' opens up Lacan's scheme to a fluid interpretation of how syntax is always intersected by corporeality, impulses and desires, in the process blurring the boundary between the symbolic and the presymbolic.⁵ The symbolic never conclusively succeeds in replacing and dominating the semiotic. Its supposedly rational criteria and rigorous syntax can never master the semiotic insofar as the territory of reason is continually criss-crossed by corporeal and irrational impulses and desires. As Kristeva puts it, 'these two modalities are inseparable within the signifying process that constitutes language' (1984:24), and the subject-in-process must always negotiate this terrain, must dwell within and (be constituted by the process of) that (lifelong) negotiation.

Entry into the Symbolic order is what Kristeva refers to as the 'thetic phase' which operates as a point of rupture or a threshold and is necessary for social and linguistic functioning. As such it corresponds to Lacan's mirror stage where the child must recognise itself as a separate being through the image of another:

The thetic phase marks a threshold between two heterogeneous realms: the semiotic and the symbolic. The second includes part of the first and their scission is thereafter marked by the break between signifier and signified. *Symbolic* would seem an appropriate term for this always split unification that is produced as a rupture and is impossible without it.

(1984:49)

However, Kristeva is interested in what motivates the move through the mirror stage to the Symbolic. Although Lacan theorises symbolic castration as the catalyst that provokes

⁵ Oliver notes that Kristeva 'has a more complex definition of the Symbolic than Lacan's. She uses *le symbolique* in two senses. *Le symbolique* can refer to the Symbolic order or the symbolic element within the Symbolic order. She often makes the distinction explicit by using *l'ordre symbolique* or *la dimension symbolique* in contrast to *le symbolique* or *symbolique*' (1993:39). See also Oliver 1993:40–41.

the infant to align itself with the phallic function of the paternal law, Kristeva suggests that in order to be cognisant of the paternal threat, the child has already taken up a position as a subject; it has already discerned the difference (in the mirror stage) between itself and an other (its image). Kristeva argues that this identification is already thetic and symbolic insofar as the mirror stage already requires a negation of the other—which Lacan defines as an act constitutive of the Symbolic. As Oliver puts it, ‘Negation is already a judgement. A judgement is made only from a position. It is already thetic’ (1993b:43). Thus, for Kristeva, in the mirror stage, the child negates its own image by conflating its image with an idea of self and thus effectively denying the image as image. Because of this denial the mirror stage must already be Symbolic (1984:122). Kristeva thus accepts Lacan’s theorisation of the function of the mirror stage and the castration complex but she queries the exclusion in his account of what is heterogeneous to the Symbolic, namely the semiotic (1977a:276). She seeks an alternative explanation for the commencement of the Symbolic, suggesting, as Oliver observes, that ‘the only way to explain the transition is to acknowledge the material element that is heterogeneous to the symbolic. [Negation] is not unique to the symbolic function or the Symbolic order’ (1993b:43). Negation (as a logic of signification) exists for Kristeva even in the materiality of the semiotic and she suggests several means of identifying its operations as *negativity* (rather than as negation) prior to the infant’s entry into the Symbolic, most notably by suggesting that maternal intervention precedes and foreshadows the paternal interdict, and by introducing the concept of abjection as excessive to the Symbolic (see section (iii) below).

Kristeva is concerned to theorise a means of demonstrating how the semiotic and symbolic, materiality and language, coexist as heterogeneous partners within the Symbolic register rather than remaining in a linear temporal relation. She suggests that there can be no subjectivity without the positioning that takes place in the thetic phase and so the subject must be the product of the ‘heterogeneous contradictions between two irreconcilable elements—separate but inseparable from the *process* in which they assume asymmetrical functions’ (1984:82). However, at the same time, the semiotic necessarily enters the symbolic in order to break the thetic phase:

The semiotic in signifying practice needs laws, boundaries, and stases, in order to go beyond and transform them....Although the dialectic between them frustrates both and maintains a constant tension, the semiotic needs the symbolic as much as the symbolic needs the semiotic. Together in constant dialectical alternation, they make up the signifying practice.

(Oliver 1993b:41; see also Kristeva 1984:81)

For Kristeva, therefore, signification is always heterogeneous, a combination of symbolic stability and semiotic materiality, of conscious articulation and unconscious drives:

To keep an account of this heterogeneity implies that one no longer consider the symbolic function as super-corporeal, super-biological and super-material, but as produced by a dialectic between two orders. Therefore, rather than of 'symbolism', we will speak of the *semiotic* as the place of this heterogeneity of sense.

(1977b:76; trans. Oliver 1993b:34)

Although Kristeva refers to the relation between the semiotic and the symbolic as a 'dialectic' (which, for Lacan, it is), the relationship actually seems more dialogic (in the sense discussed above), and it is the interplay between the two that I will argue is represented metaphorically by the maternal body. Kristeva thus argues, in agreement with Lacan that the unconscious is structured like a language, but she extends this idea to suggest that it is also structured as what is heterogeneous (or excessive) to language (Oliver 1993b:94). Where she differs from Lacan, therefore, is that she stresses that it is not only the psychological (conscious/unconscious) aspects of the self that are produced in language but also the physical (the semiotic) insofar as the body has a central role in the signifying process and should be thus included in linguistic analyses. As Lechte and Margaroni put it, Kristeva shows that the speaking subject 'retrieves the body that has been confiscated from it and is resituated at the crossroads where biological, discursive and social forces collide' (2004:23). Kristeva intends to restore materiality to the domain of signification in order to demonstrate how the 'instinctual rhythm' of the semiotic punctures, punctuates, and disrupts stable meaning (1984:100).

Kristeva wants, therefore, to reimagine the space of signification (language itself) as a site where signification processes are simultaneously systematic (governed by pre-existent rules) and corporeal (contingent, contextual, and dialogic). The semiotic for Kristeva is thus not prior to entry into the Symbolic but rather coincides with it and thus should not be conflated with pure materiality or the undifferentiated, unmediated drives that constitute the infant in the Real according to Lacan. While Kristeva acknowledges certain correspondences between her work and that of Lacan, she is critical of Lacan's theorisation of the Real as fundamentally unknowable ('a hole, a void'), suggesting instead that

the appearance of the real is not necessarily void. It is accompanied by a number of physical inscriptions that are of the order of the semiotic. Thus perhaps the notion of the semiotic allows us to speak of the real without simply saying that it's an emptiness or a blank.

(in Oliver 1993b:39)

As Anne-Marie Smith explains it, for Kristeva in contrast to Lacan,

The semiotic draws upon a sort of corporeal memory...which psychoanalysis commonly refers to as 'mnemonic traces', a reminiscence of the play of energy and drives—both destructive and pleasurable—experienced in the body with great intensity before the achievement of real and symbolic separation from the mother, of subjectivity. The semiotic...is not this state itself, which corresponds to Lacan's order of the Real...but the memory, the inscription of this state in language. So the semiotic's transgression of and containment by the symbolic enables the impossible forces of the Real to enter the symbolic and the pain of becoming a subject, separate from the archaic mother and regulated by the exclusion of the oedipal structure, to be symbolised.

(1998:16)

Thus, although Kristeva theorises several ways in which the semiotic and symbolic intersect within signification she primarily figures the semiotic as the disposition—the rhythms and sounds of merged bodies—that exists in the pre- and post-natal mother-child dyad (1977a:157). As Oliver suggests, for Kristeva, the union between the mother and child

is not merely an imaginary union. Rather, at this point, it is also a real union. The child is physically dependent on its union with the mother. Their bodies physically 'signal' to each other before the onset of language proper, before the mirror stage. Their semiotic relation sets up the onset of language.

(1993b:34)

As such, Kristeva introduces into her formulation of the semiotic a conception of a non-verbal (or 'unspeakable'), non-spatial, and non-temporal totality that precedes language, a receptacle of energy and drives that she refers to as the *chora* (borrowing the concept from Plato's *Timaeus* 48a–49d; 50–52),⁶ an ambiguous enclosed space, receptacle, or womb. Kristeva makes the connection between *chora* and womb explicit:

[T]he *chora* is a womb or a nurse in which elements are without identity and without reason. The *chora* is a *place* of a *chaos* which *is* and which *becomes*, preliminary to the constitution of the first immeasurable body...the *chora* plays with the body of the mother—of woman—but in the signifying process.

(1977b:57; trans. Oliver 1993b:46)

Thus, because it precedes (and prefigures) the formation of phallic (and paternally induced) subjectivity that marks the Symbolic, the semiotic *chora* signals a maternal site of origination.

(ii) *The Semiotic Chora and the Question of Origins*

It is in *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984) that Kristeva first introduces the notion of the *chora* as a (maternal) receptacle that precedes signification but forms the basis from which signification is made possible:

⁶ 'We borrow the term *chora* from Plato's *Timaeus* to denote an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases' (Kristeva 1986:93).

The *chora* is not yet a position that represents something for someone (i.e., it is not a sign); nor is it a *position* that represents someone for another position (i.e., it is not yet a signifier either); it is, however, generated in order to attain to this signifying position. Neither model nor copy, the *chora* precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization, and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm....Though deprived of unity, identity, or deity, the *chora* is nevertheless subject to a regulating process, which is different from that of symbolic law but nevertheless effectuates discontinuities by temporarily articulating them and then starting over, again and again.

(1986:94)

The *chora*, for Kristeva, is thus in effect the 'other' of signification and the 'other' of the logocentric origin. It is 'a modality of signifiante in which the linguistic sign is not yet articulated as the absence of an object and as the distinction between real and symbolic' (1984:26). It appears to represent a 'space' (but also paradoxically a 'no-space' because spatiality is predicated on the signification of differences) at the intersection of 'corporeal, linguistic and social' forces (1984:15). For Kristeva, the term *chora* highlights the problem she believes lies at the heart of signification, that of the constitutive role of that which lies beyond or in excess of language but which is only identifiable within language and makes language possible:

[O]nce it has been named, that functioning, even if it is pre-symbolic, *is brought back into a symbolic position*. All discourse can do is differentiate, by means of a 'bastard reasoning', the receptacle from motility....This motility is the precondition for symbolicity, heterogeneous to it, yet indispensable.

(1984:240)

This idea can be extended to subjectivity in that—at least according to poststructuralist analyses such as that of Lacan, Derrida, and Kristeva—to be a subject is to be the product of signifying practices constituted by differences between signs. However, for Kristeva, in the Symbolic, 'The subject never *is*. The *subject* is only the *signifying process* and...appears only as a *signifying practice*, that is, only when he is absent *within the position* out of which social, historical, and signifying activity unfolds' (1984:215). Here Kristeva invokes the substitutionary logic that Lacan identifies as a characteristic of signification insofar as signification gestures towards and simultaneously effaces the lack or absence at the heart of the Symbolic.

According to Kristeva the prior location of the subject is in processes that cannot be named because they operate initially outside of and then coincidentally within the Symbolic, rather than in signifying practices, where the subject (as process) is always absent. For Kristeva, as I have suggested above, the identity/non-identity of the subject as signifying process exists prior to its inauguration in the Symbolic order of language under the sign of the name-of-the-father. As such, she suggests that language only gains

its coherence with respect to its other and she places the *chora* as this other.⁷ She thus strategically undercuts Lacan's prioritisation of desire as constitutive of the self as lack, suggesting instead that prior to the Symbolic,

Without 'believing' or 'desiring' any 'object' whatsoever, the subject is in the process of constituting himself vis-à-vis a non-object. He is in the process of separating from this non-object so as to make that non-object 'one' and posit himself as 'other': the mother's body is the not-yet-one that the believing and desiring subject will imagine as a 'receptacle'.

(1984:241)

Kristeva may then theorise, much more substantially than Lacan does, the nature of this non-object, and she suggests that the archaic mother's body is the ordering principle of the *chora*. This is because, according Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, speaking subjects enter into language out of a place of conflict—between the desire for and rejection of an image of the archaic mother. As Fisher suggests,

The maternal body image is formed as the result of a major transposition. The fragmentary subject of early infancy, confronted with an idealized image of itself...confirms the attractiveness and power of that 'perfect image' and then—fatally—identifies its 'true self' as that image; it seeks to be 'other' than it is.

(1992:98)

Kristeva summarises this oscillation between attraction and repulsion as the basis of the *chora's* ambiguity suggesting that the quasi-constitution of the subject prior to its entry into the Symbolic is a product of this movement:

The semiotic *chora* is no more than the place where the subject is both generated and negated, the place where his unity succumbs before the process of charges and stases that produce him. We shall call this process...a *negativity* to distinguish it from negation, which is the act of a judging subject.

(1984:28)⁸

Thus, while the speaking subject, as the product of signifying practices in the Symbolic order, may gain identity from a specific location, this location is seen in relation to the *chora* to have been the product of prior relationships between presymbolic elements.

I will return to discuss the relationship between the concept of the archaic mother and the *chora* in Kristeva's work, but here I want first to attend to the significance of the *chora* for understanding the status of origins—the presymbolic—in Kristeva's thinking. It is with the concept of the *chora* that Kristeva raises two important, mutually intertwined questions—that of the origin of subjectivity and that of the extra-

⁷ Indeed, she draws on Plato's conception of the *chora* to suggest that it is other to the paternal law and therefore 'maternally connoted': 'Plato's *Timaeus* speaks of a *chora*...receptacle...unnameable, improbable, hybrid, anterior to naming, to the One, to the father, and consequently maternally connoted to such an extent that it merits "not even the rank of syllable"' (1977b:133).

⁸ See Lechte and Margaroni 2004:18–23 and Oliver 1993b:41–47 for a discussion of Kristeva's concept of 'negativity'. I will return below to discuss it in terms of her theory of 'abjection'.

linguistic—out of her consideration of the dialogic relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic. What is at stake in her questioning—and indeed in this thesis in my analysis of the function and status of origins within western metaphysics—is as much the determination of the nature of the ‘origin’ as the understanding of the relationship between the origin and what might precede and exceed it, if anything. Kristeva thus positions herself explicitly against the western metaphysical logocentric tradition that places the ‘Word’ (*logos*) at the origin of human subjectivity (and that can be traced to the—biblical—Johannine narrative that places the ‘Word’—*logos*—at the ‘beginning’, or to the Platonic prioritisation of *logos* over *muthos*). She suggests that this logocentric bias has insinuated itself into psychoanalytic practice, particularly as exemplified by Lacan’s structuralist intervention. Her introduction of the principle of the *chora* is intended, therefore, to rectify this logocentrism and she has admitted that this is a central preoccupation in her work (in Pollock 1998:9). As Slavoj Žižek has suggested with regard to the nature of origins, ‘the point in question is the exact status...of “nothing”’ (1996:14) and it is precisely this question that Kristeva addresses herself to.

The task for Kristeva as she sees it is to rewrite the Johannine narrative by attending to what the western logocentric tradition has designated as ‘nothing’ or as ‘other’ and by making psychoanalysis return to it in order to reveal this ‘nothing’ as ‘the underlying’ but forgotten ‘causality’ of language and the subject (1986:153). Essentially, the question is concerned with the other of the origin. The *chora* is the first principle she offers as a way of speaking of this ‘other’, although as Kathleen O’Grady has noted in conversation with Kristeva, there are several other ‘beginnings’ that Kristeva suggests throughout her work and O’Grady wonders about the extent to which they are dependent themselves on a Christian narrative of origins:

You adopted Céline’s revision in *Powers of Horror*: ‘No!: In the beginning was emotion. The Word came next to replace emotion as the trot replaces the gallop’. In *Tales of Love* you sum up your understanding of Freud with the statement: ‘In the beginning was hatred’. Your text on the relation of psychoanalysis and faith is titled *In the Beginning was Love*. And more recently your work on Proust has reformulated this statement once again: ‘In the beginning was suffering’. This continual transformation of the New Testament invocation...[suggests] the question: which of your semiotic, psychoanalytic, or Catholic proclivities generates this perpetual revisionism, this persistent desire for tracking and tracing a beginning?

(in Pollock 1996:8)

Kristeva’s reply is most interesting, and while I will cite it here at length, it is one that I will return to deal with in the concluding section of this chapter. She responds to O’Grady by stating that

Origins are one of the fundamental questions of metaphysics that cannot be entirely avoided in linguistics or psychoanalysis. Let me take the psychoanalytic point of view [first]....In speaking, in traversing the universe of signs, we arrive at emotions, at sensations, at drives, at affects and even at what Freud named the 'umbilicus of the dream'. This is something unnameable, which becomes, nonetheless, the source of our investigation....I am interested in language [*langage*], and in the other side of language which is filtered inevitably by language and yet is not language. I have named this heterogeneity variously. I have sought it out in the experience of love, abjection, of horror. I have called it the semiotic in relation to the symbolic....Then there is the second aspect of the question that my supposed 'Catholic proclivity' generates perpetual revisionism....[W]e do not have a choice but to put into practice a history of religion as a demystification. We have to rid ourselves of the history of religion. We have to say what it spoke of, otherwise....Instead...we have to *question* it....The phrase, 'In the beginning was love'...returns us to the fact that the speaking being speaks in relation to an other. What is this relation? Is it from that point that we can begin to interrogate? Is it a relation of love? Is it also a relation of hatred? Freud discerns in the relation to the other a rejection of the other. But we are still within the frame of the Bible...which poses the necessity of thinking of the Other as indispensable to the horizon of language. Thus a tradition, stretching back two thousand years since its founding texts is still in debt to these texts and as such it cannot be abandoned or dissolved before we have interrogated it, lucidly and without complacency.

(in Pollock 1998:9–10)

Thus, Kristeva seeks to understand what enables the statement 'In the beginning' to signify the transition from the presymbolic semiotic to the symbolic and to render the semiotic as the lost or forgotten origin of subjectivity.

Kristeva's repeated preoccupation with 'beginnings' also signals a discomfort, therefore, with how the movement from the semiotic to the symbolic in western metaphysics is predicated on a violent rupture between the 'One' and the 'Other', where the *logos* is divided and separated from its others (*muthos?*), the mind from its material basis and where both are established within the logic of the self-same as a singularity. As Margaroni points out, for Kristeva this 'rupture has repeatedly taken the (metaphorical) figure of a double denial, namely the denial of woman as the m/other of *logos* and the denial of the other as feminine' (2005:81). This denial constitutes a form of matricide, a forgetting of the archaic mother of individual prehistory. As such, Kristeva's conception of the *chora* seeks to transform the logic of the self-same through an act of remembrance, both in the mnemonic sense of the term but also in the sense of wanting to restore to a disembodied *logos* its dismembered corporeal other. It is the logic of the self-same that promotes a monolithic, monogenic conception of *logos* (cast into relief by a feminised, exteriorised other) and a 'metaphorics of gendered hierarchical op/positions (speech vs. silence, spirit vs. matter, time vs. space)' (*ibid.*). Kristeva instead seeks to traverse the space between the 'One' and the 'Other'. As Margaroni argues, 'the *chora* constitutes an effort on [Kristeva's] part to explore a mediating space that

preserves the alterity of the entities engaged in the process of mediation, though not at the expense of their connectedness' (2005:82). The search for a mediating space is, I will argue below, an ethical enterprise.

In what follows, I will suggest that the maternal body in Kristeva's thought constitutes a metaphor of mediation better than the *chora* does (even though the two concepts are related) and has enormous potential to undo the logic of the self-same that marks patrilinearity. The notion of the *chora* has been subject to a good deal of criticism, particularly with regard to its potentially essentialist tenor and seeming reification of femininity as existing outside of or other to the domain of the speaking subject of western metaphysics. Geraldine Meaney suggests, for example, that it 'looks suspiciously like the eternal feminine' (1993:84), and Butler has queried its subversive potential in view of the fact that the *chora* appears to be limited to 'a site outside culture itself (1990:88).⁹ In my view, Kristeva's *chora* narrowly avoids both charges in view of Kristeva's suggestion that although it is presymbolic it also inhabits the symbolic through the rupturing affects of the semiotic. Moreover, she stresses that the *chora* is a cultural phenomenon (rather than a biological one) because it consists of the cultural formation and ordering of the drives which are 'arranged according to the various constraints imposed on [the] body—always already involved in a semiotic process—by family and social structures' (1984:25). She also repeatedly emphasises that what is at stake in this configuration is the structure and economy of the drives and not simply the presence of the biological body. As such, her argument appears to echo Butler's claim (1993) that the materiality of bodies is subject to and constructed by the social order and as such is contingent and contextual. As Ziarek comments, 'More akin to rhythm and mobile traces than structure, [the *chora*] describes regulated movements and their "ephemeral" stasis, moments of gathering and irruptions, which lead to no identity, no body proper' (1992:95). However, Kristeva has tended in her recent work to avoid the use of the term *chora*, perhaps in light of criticisms, and this is one reason why I turn instead to examine her figuration of the maternal body as a mediating trope, a richer model than that of the *chora*. Although similar criticisms have been made of Kristeva's work on maternity, I will show that these are also misplaced.

I want, therefore, to address the significance of Kristeva's understanding of the fusion of the maternal body with that of the infant and to focus on how Kristeva formulates the semiotic as a maternal space that precedes and then coexists with the

⁹ See also Rose 1993:53; Stone 1983:42.

paternal aspects of the symbolic. In so doing she challenges the Lacanian and Freudian notion of the paternal function and the negation of the maternal, making the radical suggestion that the maternal body foreshadows and prefigures the Oedipal crisis, the law of the father and the inauguration of the Symbolic (see also Oliver 1993:3–5). Because of the dialogic relation between the paternal and maternal functions, the subject will always remain in process, constituted as a dialogic division, and the image of origins that emerges from the metaphor of the mother's body, therefore, presents a startling and counter-intuitive notion of an origin traversing the past, present, and future. I will then suggest in the final section that this notion indicates that origins must be understood as plural, temporally and spatially ambiguous, and produced out of a dialogic relation between maternity and paternity, between myth (*muthos*) and philosophy (*logos*).

(iii) *Maternity and Abjection*

The maternal has been a central focus (alongside literary avant-gardes, foreignness, ideological revolution, and the therapeutic and transgressive value of psychoanalysis, all of which are united under the practice of semanalysis) in Kristeva's work from *Revolution in Poetic Language* onwards. She is at pains to stress that rethinking signification is inseparable from rethinking the place that the maternal body has occupied in western discourse. Hence in the mid- to late 1970s onwards, the tenor of her work shifted from a philosophically abstract preoccupation with Marxist and structuralist linguistic analyses to a more psychoanalytically-oriented and personal style and to an interest in motherhood as well as religion, love, horror, borderline psychological states, and so on. This shift was met with some dismay by some scholars. Paul Smith lamented the 'deplorable turn of Kristeva's work of late' (1989:98) and Ann Rosalind Jones expressed disapproval with Kristeva's 'new' direction:

Kristeva began by raising important issues of subjectivity in culture, but she has ended up with escape routes that are especially unconsoling for women. Religion and romantic love have not been alternatives to women's subordination; they have been the ideologies through which that subordination was lived.

(1984:70)

Jones' criticism here, in my view, is particularly misplaced for two reasons. The first concerns the broader question of whether women should continue to engage with religious discourses that have traditionally marginalised or, as Jones suggests, 'subordinated' them. As the scholarly literature that has emerged from the areas of gender studies and religion and feminist theology attests, women can be, probably

should be, and certainly have been involved in an intense and creative dialogue with a variety of religious traditions in order to challenge and transform them in such a way that their life-affirming potential is made available for women and men equally.¹⁰ The second and related reason that Jones' criticism appears wrong is that Kristeva suggests that it is necessary to interrogate the sites that have constituted the power centres of western metaphysics in order to trace their causes, their effects, and the possibilities for their transformation (in Pollock 1998:9–10, cited above); this is not an attitude that contradicts much of the feminist effort of the last fifty years. Kristeva's interest in motherhood thus represents, in my view, an attempt to interrogate dominant western images of motherhood, to challenge the logic that underlies them, and to present creative alternatives that transgress the structures of western thought and shake their certainty. Her attempts to theorise maternity differently, however, have also met with a good deal of criticism which I discuss below.

Kristeva uses a psychoanalytic model inherited from Freud and Lacan to theorise motherhood, and it is one that is situated firmly within the 'family romance' that characterises this framework. She follows Lacan's understanding of the mother-child dyad that is interrupted by the Imaginary Father. However, where she differs from both Freud and Lacan is that Kristeva focuses on the mother's own subjectivity and experience of child-bearing, and examines the regulatory function that the mother plays in the infant's development. Kristeva also reconfigures Lacan's Imaginary Father as a presymbolic signifier that represents the mother's capacity to love someone other than the child and thus teaches the child about otherness (and love towards otherness). It is the Imaginary Father in Kristeva's thinking who acts as a mediator between the two absolutes, the Symbolic father and the abject mother. As a psychic construction, the Imaginary Father concerns the specificity of the mother's desire as it is played out in the child as a becoming-subject with identifications (1982:10).¹¹

¹⁰ The literature in this area is vast and demonstrates the extent to which women have continued to be interested and involved in religion, despite the warnings of secular feminists. Pioneers in this regard are Christ and Plaskow (1979; 1989), Ruether (1983; 1985), Schüssler Fiorenza (1983; 1984), Daly (1968; 1973; 1978), King (1987; 1989; 1995). See King (2005) and Hawthorne (2005a; 2005b) for comprehensive overviews of the history and content of the area of gender studies and religion and of the relationship of feminism to religion. See Joy *et al.* (2002; 2003) for an overview of and justification for Kristeva's (and other continental feminist theorists') relationship to religion.

¹¹ For reasons of space I am unable to detail further the mediating function of the Imaginary Father. It is an idea that reinforces the dialogic nature of the 'family romance'—between father, mother, and child—as Kristeva sets it out. See Oliver 1993b:69–90.

As I began to discuss above, Kristeva is concerned to discover how the infant is persuaded to make the transition through the mirror stage to the Symbolic and suggests that this is only possible because the child has already been constituted as a proto-subject in relation to another. Kristeva identifies the mother as the catalyst in this process: the child is able to recognise the meaning of the paternal prohibition because it has already experienced maternal regulation, insofar as the mother supervises and orders the material processes of the infant's body. The child, in Kristeva's view, (unconsciously) experiences and accedes to social regulation with regard to the mother's breast which is offered and then removed. This regulation establishes an entirely corporeal arrangement that is then reproduced in the infant's psyche and it is this cognised regulation that prepares the child to recognise and conform to the paternal interdict. It is for this reason that Kristeva insists that maternal regulation precedes and prefigures the paternal regulation of the Symbolic. The paternal function is dependent on and incomplete without the mother and the corporeal relationship between child and mother because it is she who enacts the primary regulations that set the scene for the paternal law. The mother is the 'law before the law', so to speak. As Oliver argues, Kristeva presents this reprioritisation to reveal the permeability and secondariness of the paternal Symbolic: 'Unlike Lacan, Kristeva rejoices both because the paternal prohibition is prefigured by, and dependent on, maternal regulation and because the paternal prohibition will never completely succeed since the semiotic makes its way into signification' (1993b:47). Nonetheless, Kristeva still suggests that the bond between mother and child needs to be broken and that this happens in ways similar, though not identical to the castration complex. In Freudian theory the castration anxiety in a child that moves it to align itself with the father is provoked by the child's view of his or her mother's genitals which are misrecognised as castrated. Rather than seeing the mother as castrated, Kristeva suggests that for the child the mother's sex is not focused on her genitalia but on the birth canal which is threatening because it represents the child's location prior to birth—a psychic 'no-place'—and thus signals loss of autonomy but also paradoxically leads the child to fear separation from the mother's body. As such, the mother's sex represents a fundamental ambiguity. The birth canal represents a kind of an 'inverted castration' (Oliver 1993b:55) that leads the child violently and somatically to reject the connection with the mother's body, and yet to seek it out, a reaction that for Kristeva signals abjection.

Abjection is one of Kristeva's most powerful ideas, one that she develops most comprehensively in *Powers of Horror* (1982), and can be extended to account for a variety of social exclusions and fears (of foreignness, for example) and the social rituals (such as sacrifice) that concern the management of ambiguity. Kristeva defines abjection as follows:

[It] is something that disgusts you, for example, you see something rotting and you want to vomit—it is an extremely strong feeling which is at once somatic and symbolic, and which is above all a revolt of the person against an external menace from which one wants to keep oneself at a distance, but of which one has the impression that it is not only an external menace but that it may menace us from the inside. So it is a desire for separation, for becoming autonomous and also the feeling of an impossibility of doing so.

(1988:135–136)

Kristeva argues that the abject exists on the border—of bodies and the social, of the interior and exterior of body—but is not contained at the border; it is concretely transgressive of borderlines. Thus, it is not a 'lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order' (Kristeva 1982:4). Abjection is what Derrida would refer to as an undecidable: neither one thing nor the other, syntactically undefinable. It threatens the possibility of distinction (and distinctiveness) which is, as I have discussed, considered by poststructuralists to be the basis of signification. Kristeva suggests that the abject is foundational to society in the sense that all societies must construct boundaries—political, territorial, moral, gendered, and so on—and reject anything construed as antisocial. The obvious example here is the anti-Semitism of nineteenth-century Germany that constructed of its Jewish citizens a feminised and threatening other in order to consolidate an image of the German people as masculine, strong, and original. Indeed, Kristeva singles out anti-Semitism as the 'deadliest of fantasies' suggesting that

One may suppose...that anti-Semitism will be the more violent as the social and/or symbolic code is found wanting in the face of developing abjection....Do not all attempts, in our own cultural sphere at least, at escaping from the Judeo-Christian compound by means of a unilateral call to return to what it has repressed...converge on the same...anti-Semitic fantasy?

(1982:179–180)

In any social structure, therefore, the abject is what is excluded but always threatens to call into question and transgress the boundaries upon which structures are constructed. The broad implication is that the Symbolic can only cohere through the construction of boundaries which are never secure in themselves because the act of construction ensures the exclusion of elements that are rendered abject and that therefore threaten to return and disturb the order that is achieved by their exclusion.

Within the context of the Symbolic order, the boundaries erected are the result of the paternal prohibition (the name-of-the-father) which means logically that the excluded abject must be the maternal function, the semiotic, and the maternal body. As Oliver remarks,

The prohibition that founds, and yet undermines society is the prohibition against the maternal body, whether it is the oedipal prohibition against incest formulated by Lacan, or the prohibition against the semiotic *chora* formulated by Kristeva. All of these are directed against the maternal body.

(1993:56; see also Kristeva 1982:14)

The first form of abjection is thus that of the child's struggle to separate from (and therefore exclude) the mother's body, but this proves monumentally difficult. The mother must be abjected in order to aid separation and this constitutes for Kristeva a stage prior to the mirror stage. Abjection constitutes a concept of the other (in Lacanian terms) in the state where the mother has not yet been configured as an object and the child as a subject. The child in this abject relation to the mother is not yet separated from her but is no longer identical with her; this seems to represent a separation *before* the 'beginning' (a beginning that is configured in Lacanian terms as marked by the definitive separation enforced by the paternal interdict). It is not a complete separation, however; the child at this stage is unable to determine whether it is abject or other (Oliver 1993b:57).¹² As Kristeva suggests, the abject is what exists in the space between the self and the other (1982: 10; 54).

Abjection is also another means through which Kristeva marks her difference to Freudian/Lacanian psychoanalysis: she opposes the exclusion of the abject to the Freudian concept of denial. Abjection operates outside of and prior to the dialectic of negation that produces the unconscious as a site of repressed neuroses, drives, and impulses. She suggests that Freud proposes a theory of 'denial as a means of figuring out neurosis, that of rejection (repudiation) as a means of situation psychosis' (1982:7):

The 'unconscious' contents remain here excluded but in a strange fashion: not radically enough to allow for a secure differentiation between subject and object, and yet clearly enough for a defensive *position* to be established—one that implies a refusal but also a sublimating elaboration. As if the fundamental opposition were between I and Other or, in more archaic fashion, between Inside and Outside. As if such an opposition subsumed the one between Conscious and Unconscious, elaborated on the basis of neurosis.

¹² I have often thought that the very act of being born is itself an experience of abjection in the sense that the baby is expelled from the mother's womb, moving between the inside and the outside and unable for some time to recognise its separation from the mother. This could mean that the constitutive identity of humans is in fact one of lifelong abjection and perhaps it is this 'memory' that the constitution of subjectivity seeks to erase in its construction of the self as an unambiguous singularity. See also Oliver (1993b:57; 60).

(*ibid.*)

The abject is the (pre)object that fills the infant with horror, disgust, and revulsion and is therefore the opposite of desire (which is the desire to merge with the mother). It is related to primary repression and the expulsion of the mother's body before the subject separates from her. This negativity helps, therefore, to maintain and reinforce the paternal interdiction at the stage of what Kristeva considers to be a secondary repression (the thetic stage) where the infant enters into the Symbolic, the space of desire (1982:11). Abjection as negativity sets up and rehearses the imposition of the incest taboo and is thus not so much a violently imposed law (the name-of-the-father) that secures the substitutionary status of patrilinearity as primary, but rather a bodily revulsion in respect of the mother's body. It is the abject, therefore, that maintains the illusion of autonomy and grants the individual's body a sense of achievable boundaries—equally illusory in Kristeva's account—prior to the intervention of signification on the Symbolic level.

It would appear that Kristeva represents the abject as a biological and therefore possibly essentialist or naturalised phenomenon which leaves mothers, and by extension women or femininity, in a naturally and necessarily excluded position. However, Kristeva has explored the broader social and political implications of this idea to explain and to challenge the forms of exclusion that constitute social structuration, and also to theorise how societies can tolerate difference, foreignness, and otherness without abjecting them. She develops her ideas in this regard most fully in *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991). Her focus is well summarised by McAfee: 'Why is it that we find some people *foreign*, and what makes them so threatening? Why does difference beget fear and violence, and can we ever move to an ethics of respect for those different from us?' (1993:116). One answer Kristeva proposes is that when a community ostracises or persecutes others, what is being excluded is in fact a part of that community's own identity and is analogically related to an individual's unconscious. Its own inherent otherness (insofar as Kristeva theorises the subject as always already inhabited by an irreducible alterity and dependent on the m/other's existence for its own) is projected outwards onto the people who are excluded and thus the community's other is transformed into an exteriority:

'Hell', said Sartre, 'is other people'. Perhaps, but because hell is my unconscious and I do not recognise it. Therefore, recognising what is not doing well in myself—my death drives, my eroticism, my bizarreness, my particularity, my femininity, all these uncoded marginalities that are not recognized by consensus—I would tend

less to constitute enemies from those phenomena, which I now project to the exterior, making scapegoats of others.

(1996:41)

Foreignness and difference, therefore—like the abject—elicit anxiety because it is difficult to compartmentalise. Foreigners are disturbing not because of their specific identity—appearance, speech, or behaviour—but primarily because of their indeterminacy. In other words, a foreigner shares the same qualities of humanness and yet appears different to the one who considers her- or himself as fully human. In *Strangers to Ourselves* Kristeva suggests that when ‘Confronting the foreigner whom I reject and with whom at the same time I identify, I lose my boundaries, I no longer have a container...I lose my composure’ (1991:187). She thus argues that racism, sexism, genocide, extreme nationalistic identification, and so on, are all products of the anxiety of abjection. She not only diagnoses the effects of abjection, however, but also offers a prescription in suggesting that individuals will only be capable of living with others and tolerating difference to the extent that they are able to see themselves as other, to recognise that they are ‘strangers to themselves’. It is thus vital, in Kristeva’s view, to develop an openness to the imaginative and creative opportunities afforded by strangers, whether within or without the subject. As McAfee emphasises, ‘the foreigner presents an opportunity and not an abyss’ (1993:132), which is to say that what is strange, different, or alien serves to remind the individual that it is permeable and other rather than autonomous or whole. As such the stranger serves to enable a conception of identity as transformable insofar as the self is able to be open to the other. With this idea in mind, McAfee suggests that ‘Without completion, possibility thrives’ (*ibid.*) and I believe that at the heart of Kristeva’s attempt to signify the interrelatedness of self and other is an effort to guarantee the possibility of creativity and change, to resist the violence of singularity that is inscribed in the Symbolic by demonstrating its own porousness and openness. The mother’s body, more than any other image she presents, offers an imaginative figure through which a dialogic relation of self and other can be envisaged (and which constitutes a ‘heretical ethics’); and so I now turn, in order to conclude this section, to a reflection on the form of motherhood from the perspective of a mother that Kristeva opposes to the account of the mother that proceeds from the child’s point of view, an account which arguably inscribes a patrilineal logic, in her essay ‘Stabat Mater’.

(iv) *'There stood the Mother': 'Stabat Mater', the Split Subject, and Heretical Ethics*

'Stabat Mater' (1987b) is an essay unique generically and stylistically within Kristeva's writing and appears to be an experiment in experimental writing, a form of postmodern writing that she refers to elsewhere as 'writing-as-the-experience-of limits' (1980:137). The essay is typographically split between two columns: the right-hand column occupies the majority of the text and is written in a conventional academic style; the left-hand column, in bold typeface, has a more impressionistic, and personal tone.¹³ Although Kristeva at no point states it explicitly, it appears to me that the purpose of 'Stabat Mater' is to enact or embody an alternative, dialogic discourse on motherhood, from the point of view of a mother, that resists the totalising narrative of Christian Mariology, replacing it instead with a narrative of maternity recalling the dialogic relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic. It weaves together its two styles to demonstrate the ways in which the semiotic and the symbolic coexist in discourse. The right-hand column with which the essay begins is continually disrupted by the left-hand column and which appears to describe Kristeva's own experience of motherhood, perhaps the birth of her own son around the time the essay was written. The left-hand account interleaves the right-hand column, occasionally seeming to mimic its tone, sometimes disappearing altogether. The columns finish almost simultaneously.

The essay begins with an analysis of the Virgin Mother, the most resonant symbol of 'maternity for the other' (Edelstein 1992:29) in western socio-religious discourses where the '*consecrated* (religious or secular) representation of femininity is absorbed by motherhood' (Kristeva 1987b:234). Kristeva points out that this image is a 'fantasy...of a lost territory' that involves 'less an idealized archaic mother than the idealization of the *relationship* that binds us to her, one that cannot be localized' (*ibid.*). She argues that the figure of the Virgin Mary is a fundamentally unsatisfactory and paradoxical construction—both virgin and mother, unique ('alone among women') and simultaneously a generic model for all women that encourages them to be self-sacrificing and submissive to male authority. Kristeva's argument is that Mary is, in essence, projected as a mother solely for others and that she represents a form of 'masculine sublimation', leading her to ask

What is there, in the portrayal of the Maternal in general and particularly in its Christian, virginal, one that reduces social anguish and gratifies a male being; what is there that also satisfies a woman so that a commonality of the sexes is set up, beyond and in spite of their glaring incompatibility and permanent warfare?

¹³ I indicate in bold type any quotations from the left-hand column.

She further asks if ‘there is something in that Maternal notion that ignores what a woman might say or want—as a result, when women speak out today it is in matters of conception and motherhood that their annoyance is basically centred’ (*ibid.*) Kristeva suggests that certain forms of feminism consequently demand a ‘new representation of femininity’ but in doing so they mistake the idealised representation of motherhood that the Virgin Mary appears to represent as the only possible discourse of femininity within patriarchy and so they reject it. However, as a result feminists ‘circumvent the real experience that the fantasy overshadows’ and simultaneously acquiesce in its power by granting it a hegemonic status (1987b:234). She appears here to be challenging a form of gynocentric feminism that argues that the assumption of masculine-neutral norms has meant that femininity has traditionally been presented as deficient, secondary, and lacking. Gynocentric feminism therefore is concerned to revalue sexual difference and femininity positively but does so through recourse to an essentialised notion of femininity.¹⁴ Kristeva seems to have in her sights particularly the form of feminine writing and language (*l’écriture féminine*) that was advocated by feminists such as Hélène Cixous in France during the 1970s and which was thought to retrieve a form of expression unique to women, uncontaminated by patriarchal language, and characterised by its defiance of conventional syntax, mellifluous tone, and allusive quality. In many ways, the left-hand column of ‘Stabat Mater’ appears to parody the style of *l’écriture féminine* but it is accompanied by the rigorously analytical right-hand column which enables Kristeva to avoid what she suggests is the ‘Manichean position which consists in designating as feminine’ the kind of language that is characterised by the ‘imprecise...with impulses, perhaps with primary processes’ and which results in ‘maintaining women in a position of inferiority, and, in any case, of marginality’ (1985:122–123).

The right-hand column analyses three main themes in the ‘incredible construct of the Maternal that the West elaborated by means of the Virgin’ (1987b:256). Kristeva begins by examining the social context in which the Church came to present Mary’s immaculate conception (an idea that became dogma in 1854) and suggests that it was a way of asserting her sexlessness which could then be extended to link her to sinlessness and therefore to deathlessness. Noting that the doctrine of Mary’s Assumption was

¹⁴ See Iris Marion Young (1990: 73–91) for an assessment of the benefits and problems with gynocentric feminism.

proclaimed dogma in 1950, she suggests that it may have served as a consoling fiction, and asks rhetorically 'What death anguish was it intended to soothe after the conclusion of the deadliest of wars?' (1987b:244). The second theme is the representation of Mary as queen of heaven, again linked to social exigencies, particularly the attempt by the Church to legitimise its earthly power. Finally, she examines the symbol of Mary as a 'prototype of love', and associates this idea with courtly love where 'Mary and the Lady shared one common trait: they are the focal point of men's desires and aspirations' (1987b:245). The purpose of the analysis is to suggest that while in some ways the various constructs of the Virgin Mary may have served 'women's wishes for identification' insofar as they include a symbol of femininity in an otherwise masculine religious paradigm, they more obviously functioned to stabilise society by mediating between the 'unconscious needs of primary narcissism' and the social requirement of 'the contribution of the...symbolic paternal agency' (1987b:259). But Kristeva is more interested in the needs that the construct of Mary does not resolve, at least for most twentieth-century women. Her intention is to redress the balance, to offer a narrative of maternity, of women's relationships to their own mothers and to their children. Further, although she appears to derive the impetus for her work from psychoanalysis, she wants to address the Freudian omission of a theory of motherhood:

The fact remains, as far as the complexities and pitfalls of maternal experience are involved, that Freud offers only a massive *nothing* which...is punctuated with this or that remark on the part of Freud's mother, proving to him in the kitchen that his own body is anything but immortal and will crumble away like dough; or the sour photograph of Marthe Freud, the wife, a whole mute story...

(1987b:255)

It is precisely at the point in the right-hand column where the word 'maternal' is first invoked that the left-column appears. Here Kristeva begins to write of the mother's own desire—her *jouissance*—the intensely sensual pleasure of mothering, but also of her pain, alluding to the lack of separation between the mother's body and the child's:

My body is no longer mine, it doubles up, suffers, bleeds, catches cold, puts its teeth in, slobbers, coughs, is covered with pimples, and it laughs. And yet, when its own joy, my child's, returns, its smile washes only my eyes. But the pain, its pain—it comes from inside, never remains apart, other, it inflames me at once, without a second's respite. As if it was what I had given birth to and, not willing to part from me, insisted on coming back, dwelled in me permanently. One does not give birth in pain, one gives birth to pain: the child represents it and henceforth it settles in, it is continuous....But a mother is always branded by pain, she yields to it.

(1987b:240–241)

Several important ideas are expressed in this passage, and are repeated throughout the text, all of which seem to confirm that the left-hand column can be read as

representative of the semiotic: it stresses doubling; describes the continuous oscillation between unity and separation that constitutes the relationship between the mother and child; references somatic experiences; and suggests the ambivalence between inside and outside. Moreover, and significantly, it seems that it is the mother, rather than the child, who will henceforth struggle with the experience of separation and thus with a clear and singular identity. Edelstein points out that 'the first two lyrical, "personal" passages...include no personal pronouns; the first "my", "I", and even "his"...don't occur until the third paragraph' and that it is at that point in the text that gender identity and difference appear (1992:35). Kristeva later establishes a connection between the lack of identificatory pronouns and motherhood when she remarks that **'the languages of the great formerly matriarchal civilizations must avoid, do avoid, personal pronouns'** and that they rely instead on **'trans-verbal communication between bodies....A woman's discourse, would that be it?'** (1987b:259). This statement does seem to essentialise not only women but also mothers and one might therefore be justified in suggesting—as several of her critics have—that the left-hand column, as a 'woman's discourse' is reduced to a biological, essentially inarticulable, form of communication. However, the column does not remain in this register. The dialogue between the two columns increasingly overlaps in terms of both style and content, suggesting that the ostensible 'woman's discourse' is inseparable from the more 'symbolic' discourse of the right-hand column.

The right-hand column dominates the text and seems to be 'the master text, interrupted by the repressed "voice" of the semiotic, of what's left', but the two columns 'do not remain alien to each other; in their dialogue they often mingle and overlap, echo and anticipate' (Edelstein 1992:35–36). The semiotic elements of the text appear in the right-hand column too, for example, towards the end of the essay when Kristeva requests her readers to 'listen to the *Stabat Mater*, and the music, all the music...it swallows up the goddesses and removes their necessity' (1987b:263). Here, in my view, Kristeva alludes both to the maternal ('*Stabat Mater*') and to the musicality¹⁵ of the semiotic elements of signification, suggesting that a recognition of the disruptive force of the semiotic removes the necessity for impossible representations of femininity such as the Virgin Mary.

¹⁵ The structure of the text appears to mimic the hymn '*Stabat Mater*' by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710–1736) from which the title is taken, and to which several allusions are made, which alternates between a solo voice and a counterpoint duet and to which the essay makes several allusions (1987b:245; 251–252; 263).

Taken all together, the text is resolutely transgressive; as words, images, and ideas cross back and forth between the columns the essays seems visually to perform the 'confounding the limits of the symbolic through the incursions of the semiotic' (1992:31). The notion that the text represents the dialogical relationship between the semiotic and symbolic is, in my view, the key to its understanding and it aids reflection on Kristeva's ideas of the subject-in-process and of maternity as an exemplar of the split subject. The text is also transgressive in terms of its content insofar as it moves between philosophy and literature, the abstract and the personal, the social and the subjective. Amongst the many commentators on 'Stabat Mater', Edelstein alone appears to have recognised the importance of the essay's typography, suggesting that the essay's 'narrative strategies and construction of both its speaking and reading subject(s) are as much part of its meaning—and inseparable from—its prepositional statements or theses' (1992:29). I see the essay as an enactment or embodiment of the subject-in-process, the split subject, insofar as it appears visibly to require the reader to cross back and forth between the two columns and negotiate the space between, in the process experiencing the disruptive and vertigo-inducing dialogical tension that Kristeva suggests is the nature of signification discussed above.

The structuring of the text forces the reader not just to read about the dialogic tension between the semiotic and the symbolic, but also to experience it. As Drucilla Cornell and Adam Thurschwell suggest 'Ultimately, the "truth" of non-identity can only be shown, not told' (1987:160). The reader, unable to 'master the duelling/dualling voices' of 'Stabat Mater' (Edelstein 1992:40), has to realise a dialogic situationality within connected (though possibly competing) discourses. It is a situationality where the production of stable, linear meaning is disrupted through encounter with an other meaning—allusive, fragmentary, and maternal. The typography thus also hints at an analogy with the maternal body which Kristeva elsewhere suggests is 'the place of splitting' (Kristeva 1986:238) and that 'a woman or mother is a conflict—the incarnation of the split of the complete subject, a passion' (Kristeva 1986:297). In 'Stabat Mater' she remarks that **'A mother is a continuous separation, a division of the very self, and consequently a division of language—and it has always been so'** (Kristeva 1987b:254). The text appears to me an attempt to embody the mother's body (as Kristeva understands it) as a metaphor for the subject-in-process and, in my view, largely succeeds in doing so.

The significance of the maternal body, specifically the pregnant body, in Kristeva's work, and as exemplified by 'Stabat Mater', is that it cannot be neatly divided into subject and object, self and other. For Kristeva,

A woman or mother is a conflict—the incarnation of the split of the complete subject, a passion....Pregnancy... is an identity that splits, turns in on itself, and changes without becoming other. The threshold between nature and culture, biology and language....If pregnancy is a threshold between nature and culture, maternity is a bridge between singularity and ethics.

(1986:297)

What does Kristeva mean when she talks of the maternal as a site of splitting? It only makes sense in the context of her other work if we consider that she is employing it as a metaphorical device to illustrate the temporary constitution of the subject dialogically. Making a connection between the Virgin Mary's pain and that of her son's, and between his pleasures and hers, she suggests that mothers are '**crossroads beings, crucified beings**' (1987b:254). This indicates, as Edelstein notes, that, 'all (split) subjects exist at such crossroads between pain and pleasure, lack and plenitude, sameness and difference' (Edelstein 1992:33). When Kristeva talks of the maternal as a site of splitting, therefore, I believe she employs it as a metaphorical device, rather than a literal description of a mother's body, to illustrate the temporary constitution of the subject, a subject-in-process. Metaphor (from the Greek *metapherein* meaning 'to carry or transfer', or 'to carry beyond'), is etymologically connected to the root 'to bear children' or 'to give birth to' as well as 'to transgress', and thus to *māter*. Metaphor, like the subject-in-process and the maternal body, is always other to itself—it does not provide meaning as purely present but rather gestures to a space beyond itself, leaving meaning deferred. It is a space of suspension, and one that suggests a model of identity radically at odds with that of the self-same. Subjectivity, for Kristeva, appears to reside in a gap, and so the dialogue between the two columns in 'Stabat Mater' gestures towards—orients the reader towards—the space in between, recalling Bakhtin's notion of the constitution of the self as a form of intertextuality in the dialogue *between* self and other discussed above.¹⁶

Reading 'Stabat Mater' poses an immediate problem: what strategy does one employ to access its meaning? Does one read the right column first and then the left?

¹⁶ The structure of the text echoes that of Derrida's novel *Glas* (1974) and his two-columned essay 'The Double Session' in *Dissemination* (2004). As Barbara Johnson argues in her introduction to *Dissemination*, this type of double typography suggests 'that an effort is being made to call the reader's attention to the syntactical function of spacing in the act of reading' (2004:xxviii).

Does one attempt a complicated synthesis of both columns at once? How does the text position the reader? Edelstein suggests that

A reader's specific relation to, and experience of, this challenging text depends on who that reader is—whether a woman, man, another mother, a woman not a mother, a Christian, etc. For those readers not mothers, the discourse by the mother may be alien, exotic, spoken by a sort of 'native informant from the land of mothers. For non-Christian readers, the discourse about the Virgin Mary may seem merely a description of a quaint or peripheral phenomenon, not a powerful cultural myth or religious symbol. Perhaps this text's ideal imagined reader would be a heterosexual Christian woman who has borne at least one son and who knows something about theoretical and literary avant gardes. If one doesn't match this description on any or all counts, then perhaps one becomes the very other, even the other woman, of whom this text speaks. Does this text love or exclude and marginalise such an other?

(1992:39)

It is a good question. Edelstein wonders whether Kristeva is speaking in both columns as a 'subject who knows' in order to employ an exclusionary textual strategy. She concludes, however, and I agree with her, that the 'other reader' could 'decide to read the maternal as metaphorical in order not to be excluded' (1992:39). She argues persuasively that the text 'makes us all mothers metaphorically, as split-subjects, or reveals that we are already both [other and mother]' (1992:40).¹⁷

Many critics of Kristeva, Domna Stanton in particular (1989), accuse her of trying to sever the connection between the maternal as metaphor and its biological referent, of essentialising an equation of femininity with maternity, or of alternately prioritising the semiotic over the symbolic or *vice versa*. Paul Smith, for example, accuses Kristeva of turning 'her emphasis away from the mutually constraining dialectic between the semiotic and the symbolic, and toward a revindication of a putative priority and primacy of the semiotic' (1988:126). On the other hand, Butler contends that the very fact that Kristeva theorises the semiotic as a subversive force reifies the hegemonic power of the symbolic in view of the fact that the paternal law is what imposes the illusion that femininity is somehow outside of the symbolic. For Butler there can be no 'true body beyond the law' (1990:82, 93). However Kristeva's theorisation of the coincidence of the semiotic and the symbolic—both temporally and spatially—suggests that Butler's work and her own are less opposed than Butler would have it. Kristeva has suggested, for example, that 'bio-psychological processes' are 'already inescapably part of the signifying process' (1986:28). When 'Stabat Mater' is read in the context of Kristeva's broader theoretical arguments regarding the dialogic relationship between

¹⁷ See Edelstein 1992:40–44 for a very persuasive discussion of how the maternal for Kristeva becomes a 'metaphor for metaphor itself.

self and other, inside and outside, the semiotic and the symbolic, it becomes clear that neither the semiotic or the symbolic take priority but are in fact dependent on each other. To suggest otherwise goes against the transgressive subjectivity that is represented by Kristeva's figuration of the subject-in-process; her critics cannot have it both ways.

In my view, Kristeva's critics read her work very selectively, and their critiques almost always concentrate on one column of the essay, usually the right-hand one, and confuse it with Kristeva's own position on motherhood rather than recognising that it is instead a description and analysis of what motherhood has signified within patrilineal systems such as the Judeo-Christian tradition and Freudian psychoanalysis. Grosz, for example, singles out the right-hand column as the subject of her critique and suggests that 'Kristeva focuses her analysis of maternity, not on the experience of motherhood, nor on women's representations of maternity, but on phallogentric textual images, most particularly those of the Virgin Mother presented in Christian theology' (1990:162–163). This claim is only sustainable if one reads only the right-hand column, and then rather cursorily at that. Kristeva herself resists such a reading when, in 'Stabat Mater', she critiques the 'resorption of femininity within the Maternal', calling it a 'masculine appropriation...which is only a fantasy masking primary narcissism' (1987a:236). When commentators emphasise the right-hand column they accuse her of conflating motherhood with femininity and reducing it to a marginal corporeal domain (Stanton 1989:158–159; 160).¹⁸ However, while she does maintain a link to the experiences of actual mothers (indeed, she must in order for the metaphor to have any resonance), I think a dialogic reading of the texts demonstrates that these experiences are open to others too, once the interweaving of the text is employed to understand subjectivity as processual and dialogic. Edelstein, too, argues that 'there's something to be gained by (plural) theories or metaphors of the maternal that allow mothers, child-free women, and even men to *become* (rather than *be*) "maternal"' (1992:43–4). In an echo of my earlier concern to provide a viable alternative to the motif of patrilinearity, Edelstein, remarking that theoretical discourse is 'irremediably metaphorical', suggests that 'we need better (or at least different) metaphors' and asks 'why not dethrone the phallus, even if the maternal is crowned only transitionally?' (1992:44).

¹⁸ See Moi 2002:149–172 and 1989a:117–132 for a defence of Kristeva against the charge of essentialism.

What is required to effect such a transition? Michel Foucault (1982:216) has suggested that '[w]e have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of [the] kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries'. Kristeva similarly believes that 'there can be no socio-political transformation without a transformation of subjects: in other words, in our relationship to social constraints, to pleasure, and more deeply, to language' (Kristeva 1981:141). Coinciding with the original title of the essay, she advocates a neologistic '*hèrétique*' ('a heretical ethics...and *herethics*'; 1987b:263) based on the conception of the mother who relates to the other through and with love rather than the Law. Kristeva presents maternity as a model, founded on the ambiguity of pregnancy and birth that oscillates between the inside and the outside, between subject and object (Oliver 1993a:5; 1991) and she proposes an ethics that proceeds from the divided subject rather than that of the autonomous agent of western post-Enlightenment metaphysics. Generally speaking, the metaphysics that has proposed an ethical orientation towards others has postulated an autonomous agent, routinely inscribed as normatively masculine, whose obligations to the other come from 'his' realisation that the other must be the same, or at least equivalent to, 'himself'.¹⁹ The autonomous subject of this ethics does not have a relation to any other; rather it always and only has a relationship to the self-same, that is a selfhood posited as the same against an other as representative of difference. Kristeva, in contrast, as I have suggested, conceives of a notion of difference that does not operate according to a dualist logic of opposition and she develops a series of ethical models that present an assumption of the other as inherent within oneself rather than as exterior. These models enable Kristeva to imagine an otherness at the very core of the subject, all of which indicate a 'subject-in-process/on trial'. She proposes that models of alterity can inform a new way to conceive of the structure of the relation to others and thereby produce a new way to conceive of ethics, or 'herethics', a term which well conveys the sense in which such an ethics goes against conventional, binary understandings of the self. As such it is

¹⁹ Within the history of western philosophy, ethics or *phronesis* (practical wisdom) has been understood to rely on higher-order principles about the goals of human life, which themselves were based on claims about the nature of reality and reason that constituted western metaphysics. Thus, in the Christian era, how one was supposed to act was dependent on what one understood God to be, that is, on one's basic metaphysical commitments. In the aftermath of the Enlightenment, God became more distant and more abstract and so the confessional basis for ethical judgement that justified moral rules in terms of duty or salvation receded. In its place, ethics moved to the empirical realm and was transformed into a descriptive utilitarianism, as explained by David Hume in terms of what is '*useful, or agreeable to a man himself, or to others*' (Hume 1975:336). The basis of ethics thus shifted from a pre-ordained religious soteriology to one founded on human autonomy. See Chapter 1.

an 'outlaw ethics' (Oliver 1993a:5). Kristeva's work on language, borderline patients, literary limit-texts, the maternal, the abject, and faith is brought together by an interest in what exists at and beyond the boundaries of human experience. It is an ethics that challenges rather than presupposes the autonomous ethical agent that sets up obligations to the other as obligations to the self, and furthermore it binds the subject to the other through love and not through the 'Law-of-the-Father'. The model of ethical love is the mother's love for her child, but also, by implication, for herself, and for her own mother. This is an ethics which is predicated on a reaching out to, rather than overcoming, the other and is thus a sacrifice of singular, unitary identity. It offers an alternative to the individualism of patrilinearity that seeks, as I have argued, to establish the primacy of the knowing subject at the expense of the other through the distillation of duality into a self-same singularity. The motif of patrilinearity emphasises combat with one's forefathers in a dialectic encounter, whereas the stress in Kristeva's presentation of maternity is on connection, love, nurture, and dialogue.

It could be argued, of course, that the efficacy of a maternal model of ontology might only apply to women who are mothers, much as 'Stabat Mater' might be seen to be addressed solely to mothers, and that its value for constructing a new theory of identity is consequently limited. However, in my view, maternity is not simply a model of ontology for women, nor indeed specifically for mothers. Patrilinearity has been a hegemonic framework of identity operating without regard to an individual's gender (even though it assumes a male father as a universal metaphor and underlying organising principle) in that both men and women are expected to align themselves with its values and logic. Thus, women's (and also men's) participation in the field of culture has been predicated on their relative ability or inability to conform to the prerequisites of normative subjectivity construed as paternal and masculine, a practice made explicit in psychoanalytic theory but which has been a foundational assumption of identity in western metaphysics in general, as Genevieve Lloyd (1993) has demonstrated so convincingly. Further, as I suggested in Chapter 8, patrilinearity is predicated on a dualistic and *dialectical* framework of self and other that seeks to distil the essence of subjectivity into singularity through an agonistic encounter that ensures the triumph of the self-same over the other by means of the erasure or marginalisation of otherness as difference. In contrast, maternity provides a dialogical understanding of identity, open to both men and women *as a metaphor*—an image which aids the imagination of a

different economy of being—that seeks a non-agonistic relationship between self and other.

I believe Kristeva offers a solid ethical framework for posing the self as multiple, transgressive, and unable logically to resolve its paradoxical strands of singularity and multiplicity. Rather than a weakness, Kristeva's failure to provide a resolution to the paradox of subject formation is a strength in that it enables identities to be plotted in a dialogic mode which, *contra* Ricoeur and the Cartesian self, questions the singularity or unity of selves by posing them as always already fragmented and divided. Her conception of the abject and her examination of the creative potential offered by foreignness and difference, and of otherness as constitutive of the self, suggests an alternative basis for subjectivity, rather than one that establishes (singular) place or origin as the guarantors of identity. The transgressive and fluid nature of maternity as suggested by Kristeva, I believe, suggests process, movement, and ambiguity rather than fixed origin as conventionally construed within a patrilineal framework of identity, and is thus an intervention that does not seek a fixed destination or original source for subjectivity, signified in her insistence on a 'subject-in-process'. Further, maternity, as an ontological metaphor derived from the perspective of mothers, traverses the boundaries between past, present, and future and enables a radical—although possibly counter-intuitive—conception of origins as unfixed in time.

In my view, therefore, maternity as reconceived by Kristeva offers a transitional ontological metaphor that offers the potential to dismantle and dethrone the singular power of patrilinearity in the western metaphysical tradition. It must be transitional rather than final because to inaugurate maternity as a single or dominant site of origin would be to replicate the patrilineal logic that I am opposing. The concept of 'natality', suggested by Grace Jantzen (1999), amongst others (Cavarero 1995; Arendt 1958; Bowen-Moore 1989) may indicate one future direction for a new model of identity, but such a model, in passing too quickly over and failing fully to explore the significance and potential of the maternal metaphor, continues to align motherhood with the 'death drive' (see Jantzen 2003:121–127) and thus marks it as a site of negativity—although Jantzen criticises Kristeva for doing just this. The model of motherhood that Kristeva suggests in 'Stabat Mater' resists the alignment of the maternal with death and pushes it towards life for and in the other. Jantzen's concept of natality, while it opposes the patriarchal underpinnings of psychoanalytic theory, assumes the psychoanalytic practice of taking the perspective of the infant as the source of identity work and so

remains only a partial reworking of patrilineal logic, in my view. I believe that understandings of 'the mother' in psychoanalytic theory as a site of negativity need to be subject to a rigorous reinterpretation and reconfiguration *before* a model of natality can be asserted as a preferable alternative to a patrilineal model. Reconsidering the mother-child dyad from the perspective of the mother may well open up a means to think natally but the hard work of dismantling conventional narratives of motherhood as presented by psychoanalysis must first be confronted.

Kristeva has insisted throughout her work that rethinking the maternal body has to be inseparable from rethinking language. Maternity consequently is not reduced to mute biologism, or a naïve mystification of the prelinguistic unity between mother and child. Rather, as Ziarek notes, Kristeva's realignment of the relationship between the maternal body and language is 'a displacement of natural primacy by a strategic redistribution of positions, *a departure from natural origins*' (1992:93; my emphasis). Her complex and rich body of writing implies that the question of the maternal is necessarily intertwined with the reconfiguration of language as a social practice rather than merely a nostalgic return to what is, in patriarchal discourse, a prelinguistic phantasy of maternal emptiness. Her representations of maternity, the semiotic, and the *chora* implies a prioritisation of heterogeneity over homogeneity, and this heterogeneity must be taken in a double sense: not only as the intersection of corporeality and language, but also as the intersection of two signifying economies. It is by focusing on the disruptive and heterogeneous elements of signification that Kristeva is able to theorise the forms of otherness and pluralities that are excluded by unifying orders of discourse. And it anticipates an alternative, 'other' understanding of language that welcomes and celebrates its heterogeneous elements. Such an attitude suggests an approach to narrative that opens it up to variant and various readings, and perhaps suggests a way to conceive of a feminist practice of narrativity, as Hite indicates:

The notion that stories inevitably both obscure and encode other stories has been axiomatic to our understanding of narrative....When construed as repressed or suppressed stories of the Other, these other stories become the enabling conditions for the writing and reading of feminist narrative.

(1989:4)

In what follows, I want to conclude the thesis by extending Kristeva's work on maternity in two ways. Firstly I want to consider how her work might suggest a different reading of origins as multiple and transgressive of temporality and spatiality. Secondly, I want to use her work, read alongside Derrida's deconstruction of philosophy, as a way of anticipating a feminist philosophy of myth (and mythology of

philosophy) that questions the clarity of the boundaries between myth and philosophy, one that might place mythology as dialogically intertextual rather than dialectically constituted.

II. Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Myth

Throughout this thesis I have sought to establish that the search for origins within the western metaphysical tradition, of which the German case was one example, reveals a preoccupation with singularity as the legitimating source of identity. I have further suggested that singularity is a motif of patrilinearity—one that can be tracked through the German example, but which is also a feature of Ricœur's theorisation of narrative identity, Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, and the field of mythology—insofar as it locates the father as a non-transcendable origin that founds a discourse of causality and continuity, ruthlessly erasing otherness from the scene of its creation. Kristeva's work, in contrast, proposes a model of maternity that asserts a very different logic of origins which is able to accomplish a displacement of paternal originality, not by placing the mother as the sole origin of human subjectivity but by suggesting that motherhood functions in dialogue with the paternal law, disrupting its singularity and its temporal/spatial clarity. I noted above that Kristeva's own work has returned repeatedly to the question of the 'Beginning' as an attempt to rethink symbolic signification as centred on the *Logos*, (which has characterised both Johannine theology and Platonic thought and is repeated in psychoanalysis). She suggests that rather than ignoring these traditions, it is necessary to confront their powerful logic, interrogating them 'lucidly and without complacency' (in Pollock 1998:10). I have attempted to pursue a similar project in this thesis, demonstrating how the motif of patrilinearity has saturated western metaphysics, and in particular its theorisation of ontology, to the point that it appears natural and unassailable. Patrilinearity as such, I have argued, has served as the condition of western metaphysics' possibility and the difficulty, therefore, of dismantling its logic should not be underestimated. Butler has claimed, for example, that 'the masculine sex' necessarily '*appears* to originate meanings and thereby to signify' those meanings as an effect with ideological ends (1990:45). Within patrilineal discourses, therefore, it would seem that women will always and only be, and only be presented as, 'the masculine sex encore (and *en corps*) parading in the mode of otherness' (1990:12). However, Kristeva defies this logic to the extent that she demonstrates that this 'mode of otherness' is in fact the real basis from which discourse and signification

proceeds—everyone is a ‘stranger to themselves’—and provides models of alterity that query the singularity of self-same, paternally originated subjectivity. In so doing she is able to demonstrate that the symbolic ordering that has been presented as characteristic of signification is more porous and unstable than it appears.

Perhaps this is the reason that Kristeva ‘chooses’ to undertake her own project from within the paternal signifying system (insofar as rational critique appears to reiterate the terms of patrilinear signification) because the poststructuralist analyses of signification which Kristeva herself has been so influential in developing suggest the difficulties of speaking outside of and without reference to the dimensions of this encompassing order. As Peggy Kamuf has argued,

If one concludes that...there is nothing beyond oppositional modes of thought and being, no outside from which something else can intervene which is not already programmed by the dialectical machine, then indeed one’s oppositional strategy must fully espouse the logic of change (of history) made possible there and in those terms.

(Kamuf and Miller 1990:125)

Kamuf’s stance bears a similarity to that of Kristeva insofar as Kamuf suggests that while ‘one cannot take up a position against [the idea of ideological] positions’, effective ‘oppositional tactics’ must necessarily keep ‘open a space for possible dislocation...giving the traces of the non-opposable other a chance to make their mark before they are too quickly reduced to recognizable positions and thereby made available to dialectical reason and its institutions’ (Kamuf and Miller 1990:125–126). Kamuf here alludes to the double gesture that I argued in the Introduction was a feature of feminist theory and practice, one that is helpfully clarified by Diane Fuss’ argument that feminist discourse is situated within cultural values that it must nonetheless critique: “‘essentially speaking’...we need both to speak and, simultaneously to deconstruct these spaces [of discourse] to keep them from solidifying’. ‘Such a double gesture’, she suggests, ‘involves once again the responsibility to historicize, to examine each deployment of essence, each appeal to experience, each claim to identity in the complicated contextual frame in which it is made’ (1989:118). The poststructural model of feminist (and indeed any and all radical forms of) critique presented by Kristeva recognises and enacts this double gesture—the requirement to critique and deconstruct paternal modes of signification while risking their reification in one’s choice of strategies in order to speak at all. As Gayatri Spivak puts it, the deconstructive philosophical position consists in saying an ‘impossible “no” to a structure, which one critiques, yet intimately inhabits’ (1990a:28), a form of critique she terms ‘catachresis’, ‘reversing,

displacing, and seizing the apparatus of value-coding' (1990b:228). Thus to examine and critique a history of origins—to trace the origin of the concept of origins—such as I have tried to do in this thesis, does to some degree acquiesce in patrilineal logic but at the same time, by demonstrating the ways in which this logic has pursued its course, I have also sought to dismantle its hegemonic power, to suggest that it operates through exclusion and amnesia, the forgetting or effacing of its 'other' scene. In reading Kristeva's work on dialogic subjectivity-in-process into this paternal economy, and the ongoing interchange between the semiotic and symbolic, metaphorically represented by the maternal body, I have tried to suggest a heretical theorisation of origins that retrieves this other scene, suggesting that the origin myths of western metaphysics are not in fact singular, linear and causal but are rather sites of irresolvable (and thus dynamic) disparity, difference, and dialogue. Origins in this frame are imagined as necessarily plural and fluid, traversing time and space and preserving identity as multiple rather than singular. Thus I agree with Foucault when he suggests that

If the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is 'Something altogether different' behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms....What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.

(Foucault 1984:78–79)

Kristeva's assertion of the dynamic play between the semiotic and the symbolic elements of signification points also towards the possibility of reimagining the oppositional relationship (at least within the history of western metaphysics) of myth and philosophy—*muthos* and *logos*. In the remainder of this chapter, therefore, I want to reflect briefly on the possibilities of thinking this relationship differently with regard to the model of dialogism developed by Kristeva and Derrida's deconstruction of philosophy. I suggested in the Introduction that the fields of mythology and philosophy locate their origins in the Platonic prioritisation of *logos* over *muthos*. What is generally forgotten in these accounts, however, is that Plato's rejection of poetic and rhetorical uses of language in *The Republic* and *The Sophist* was dialectically enabled through recourse to metaphor and myth. Plato's prioritisation of reason (*logos*) sought discursively to inscribe its authority through what Foucault suggests was a 'delimitation of a field of objects'—that is, the exclusion of *muthos* from the scene of reason—by defining a singularly 'legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories', namely *logos* (in Bouchard 1977:199). Plato did this by aligning *logos* with truth and *muthos* with superstition and falsity, in the

process effectively asserting the authority and agency of the philosopher. However, because he used myth to do so, it would appear that reason was in fact more dependent on its 'other' than Plato could admit and one could recall here that Kristeva's theorisation of paternal interdiction as being reliant on maternal regulation reveals a similar dynamic.

This same dependence—of *logos* on *muthos*—marks the post-Enlightenment development of mythology as discussed in Chapter 1 (with the key difference that it was much more firmly intertwined with ontological preoccupations) insofar as myth as a category was wielded by rationalist philosophers to assert the truthfulness of their own discourses and of the autonomous, rational individual. In the romantic variant, while myth was not asserted as fabrication but rather as essential truth, this was nonetheless done with reference to, and to some extent against reason. Thus, the very term 'mythology' as represented by the rationalist and romantic approaches, both of which are current in the contemporary field, seems to enact a conflict, where *logos* and *muthos* are set in opposition but derive their coherency and value through their respective other. It is a conflict which goes to the heart of western metaphysics in its promotion of the economy of the self-same, always excluding its other but only through an act of deliberate forgetfulness or erasure. Derrida puts this profoundly when he brings together many of the themes that I have examined in this thesis, suggesting that

Metaphysics [is] the white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own *logos*, that is, the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason....White mythology—metaphysics has erased within itself the fabulous scene that has produced it, the scene that nevertheless remains active and stirring, inscribed in white ink, an invisible design covered over in the palimpsest.

(Derrida 1982:213)

Here Derrida demonstrates that the structures of signification that have informed the opposition between myth and reason have effected their closure through strategies of (racial and cultural) exclusion and hierarchisation that erase, suppress, and marginalise anything that threatens their 'founding' values, strategies which the German search for origins exemplified. The German example achieved a coherent model of German identity through a series of exclusions, most pointedly between Germans and Jews, Germans and other Europeans, masculinity and femininity, fathers and mothers, past and present, authenticity and cosmopolitanism. For all the ostensible acts of remembrance that constituted the search for origins pursued by the German romantics and their descendants, it was in actual fact collective forgetfulness—the invention rather than the retrieval of traditions—that enabled these origins to be asserted. However, the

Germans were not unique in this regard; rather, they used identification strategies embedded within western metaphysics more generally. Derrida characterises the assertion of ‘founding’ values achieved through acts of suppression as having been the conditions of possibility for philosophy’s articulation but demonstrates that these acts have also figured its death:

That philosophy died yesterday, since Hegel or Marx, Nietzsche, or Heidegger—and philosophy should still wander toward the meaning of its death—or that it has always lived knowing itself to be dying...; that philosophy died *one day, within history*, or that it has always fed on its own agony, on the violent way it opens history by opposing itself to nonphilosophy, which is its past and its concern, its death and wellspring; that beyond the death, or dying nature, of philosophy, perhaps even because of it, thought still has a future, or even, as is said today, is still entirely to come because of what philosophy has held in store; or, more strangely still, that the future itself has a future—all these are unanswerable questions. By right of birth, and for one time at least, these are problems put to philosophy as problems philosophy cannot resolve.

(2001:97–98)

The self-presentation of philosophy as a singularity is here brought into question by gesturing towards its birth and its death which might be read as sites of *différance*. The concept of *différance*, as such, suggests a means of undoing the implacable oppositions of western metaphysics that philosophy encodes by indicating their interdependence, the forms of deferral and difference that underlie all signification and mark its instability. And Kristeva’s model of dialogic subjectivity signals a similar rearticulation of signification that can be extended to query the distinction between myth and philosophy. Further, if these oppositions aim relentlessly to suppress the other as inferior and threatening to the coherency of the self-same, then their structures of signification can also be rearticulated differently.

The value of Kristeva’s and Derrida’s insights in this regard lies in the fact that oppositions of the kind which myth and philosophy represent can be undone by rearticulating—or re-membling—the structure of their difference, the very structure that the positing of ‘foundational’ origins seeks to repress. Moreover, it is through this structure that the strategies for challenging authority and power that are derived from these origins can be shown to lie inside, rather than outside, the ambivalence and heterogeneity that foundational origins, such as that of patriliney, seek to suppress. Instead, one can assert *différance*, or the metaphor of the maternal body as a heterogeneity rather than a singularity, as an ‘origin’ for myth and philosophy in dialogue and also, therefore, mythology’s future horizon. As Derrida suggests,

To say that *différance* is originary is...to erase the myth of a present origin. Which is why “originary” must be understood as having been *crossed out*, without which

différance would be derived from an original plenitude. It is a non-origin which is originary.

(2001:255)

I want to suggest finally, therefore, that maternity, myth, and philosophy, may be connected in such a way that mythology can be rearticulated as a dialogue (*'that is still to come'*) rather than an agonistic struggle to privilege one side of the *muthos-logos* equation over the other. In a recent documentary film about Derrida, Derrida is asked 'which philosopher would you like to have been your mother?' His response opens up a series of interesting possibilities, all of which bear on the gendered—paternal and maternal—dimensions of philosophy, and of myth:

...it's impossible for me to have any philosopher as a mother. That's the problem. My mother couldn't be a philosopher....[This] means that for me, the figure of the philosopher—which is also why I deconstruct philosophy—is always masculine. This is one reason I undertook the deconstruction of phallogocentrism. It's the deconstruction of what one calls philosophy which, since its inception, has been linked to a masculine, paternal figure....A philosopher is a father, not a mother. So the philosopher who would be my mother would be a post-deconstructive philosopher....My mother as a philosopher would be my granddaughter, for example, an inheritor. A woman philosopher who would reaffirm deconstruction and consequently would be a woman who thinks. Not a philosopher. I always distinguish thought from philosophy. A thinking mother, that's what I basically try to create. It's what I both love and try to bring to life, to give birth to, to project.

(in Dick and Kofman 2002)

Clearly Derrida's response could be interpreted as repeating the patrilineal fiction of male parturition insofar as he suggests that he tries to 'give birth' to the 'thinking mother'. However, it is the maternal body as figured by Kristeva that suggests a different reading in its interweaving of time and space, inside and outside, self and other, father and mother. It suggests, as Derrida affirms, that 'thought has a future' one very different from the death-dealing enterprise of philosophy's closures and amnesias. To place philosophy and myth in dialogue on the model of the maternal body, points to the future horizon of mythology, by substituting the violence of the self-same with a recognition and joyous celebration of the heterogeneity that lies at the origin of signification, disrupts its claim to singular presence, and takes it into an unknowable future. The maternal body as a metaphor of origins, of the future of mythology enacts, therefore, a (heretical) feminist reading of myth and philosophy as a double gesture, of a division but not a separation, not a site of transcendence but one of immanence. In the end, then, as in the beginning, there is no pure origin, only *différance*, the mother's body as a sign of the heterogeneity of discourse and of selves, myth and philosophy in an ongoing dialogue—impure, transgressive, plural...an impossible possibility.

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APPENDIX I

TRANSLATIONS AND TRANSCRIPTIONS

Chapter Three

p. 91: These barbarians are our fathers, their language the source of our language, and their unrefined songs the mirror of the ancient German soul [reflected] in the simplicity of our character.

Diese Barbaren sind unser Väter, ihre Sprache die Quelle unserer Sprache, und ihre rohen Gesänge der Spiegel uralter Deutschen Seelen in ihrer Einfalt des Charakters.

p. 91: Read Tacitus, because there you will find our character; the German tribes who themselves have not degenerated through intermixture with others, they are a distinct, unadulterated original nation which is the archetype of itself. Even the breeding of their bodies is still the same in a large number of the people.

Lies Tacitus, da findest du ihren Charakter: die Völker Deutschlands, die sich durch keine Vermischung mit anderen entadelt, sind eine eigne, unverfälschte Originale Nation, die von sich selbst das Urbild ist. Selbst die Bildung ihres Körpers ist in einer so großen Menge Volks noch bei allen gleich.

Chapter Six

p. 159: Our poetry, I claim, is missing a centre in the way that mythology was, for the ancients, completely necessary, so much so that modern poetry is inferior to that of the ancient, and can be summarised in the words: We do not have a mythology.

Es fehlt, behaupte ich, unsrer Poesie an einem Mittelpunkt, wie es die Mythologie für die der Alten war, und alles Wesentliche, worin die moderne Dichtkunst der antiken nachsteht, läßt sich in die Worte zusammenfassen: Wir haben keine Mythologie.

p. 161: ...follow the example which Goethe constructed, to investigate the forms of art as far as their origin in order to be able to revive or connect them, and [to] trace back to the

sources of their own language and literature, [in order] to set the ancient vitality and high spirit free again which currently slumbers unrecognised in the ancient national documents from the *Nibelungenlieder* [Song of the Nibelungen] up to Flammig and Weckherlin.

...Vorbilde folgen, was Goethe aufgestellt hat, die Formen der Kunst überall bis auf den Ursprung erforschen, um sie neu beleben oder verbinden zu können, und daß sie auf die Quellen ihrer eignen Sprache und Dichtung zurückgehn, und die alte Kraft, den hohen Geist wieder frey machen, der noch in den Urkunden der vaterländischen Vorzeit vom Liede der Nibelungen bis zum Flammig und Weckherlin bis jetzt verkannt schlummert.

p. 162: chivalric and Christian mythology

ritterliche und christliche Mythologie.

p. 162: nothing other than the primordial German manliness (bravery, courage) tamed by Christendom.

Nichts anders...als die ursprüngliche Deutsche Tapferkeit, durch das Christenthum gezähmt.

Chapter Seven

p. 173: It is perhaps the right time to collect these fairy tales since those who have been preserving them are becoming invariably rarer...for the custom of telling tales is ever more on the wane, just as all the homely places in dwellings and gardens are yielding to empty splendour.

Es war vielleicht gerade Zeit, diese Märchen festzuhalten, da diejenigen, die sie bewahren sollen, immer seltner werden...denn die Sitte darin nimmt selber immer mehr ab, wie alle heimlichen Plätze in Wohnungen und Gärten einer leeren Prachtigkeit weichen.

p. 175: I think, however, if all goes well, God willing, then reading and writing in Germany will become gradually less political and so forth—instead, pious work, sowing and ploughing will once again be satisfyingly calm, which is indubitably better suited to us than the shrieking, irascible manner that the cursed French brought us.

Dennoch meine ich, daß des Lesens und Schriebens in Deutschland, wenn es gut geht, was der liebe Gott gebe, nach und nach weniger werden soll, politisch und sonst—dagegen das fromme Arbeiten, Säen und Pflügen in zufriedener Stille wieder mehr angehe, was unstreitig uns angemessener ist, denn die verfluchten Franzosen haben uns gebracht in ihr kreischendes, auffahrendes Wesen.

p. 175: The eagerness with which studies of old German culture were pursued also helped to overcome the oppressiveness of those times. Without doubt, world events and the need to withdraw into the peace of scholarship had contributed to the reawakening of that long forgotten literature; one sought in the past not only consolation but also the hope was natural that this direction would contribute to the return of another time.

Das Drückende jener Zeiten zu überwinden half denn auch der Eifer, womit die altdeutschen Studien getrieben wurden. Ohne Zweifel hatten die Weltereignisse und das Bedürfnis, sich in den Frieden der Wissenschaft zurückzuziehen, beigetragen, daß jene lange vergessene Literatur wieder erweckt wurde; allein man suchte nicht bloß in der Vergangenheit einen Trost, auch die Hoffnung war natürlich, daß diese Richtung zu der Rückkehr einer anderen Zeit etwas beitragen könne.

p. 175: Distrust and antipathy towards the French will remain firmly impressed upon those of us who belong to this generation, although we see things much more mildly than we did in 1813-15. As far as I am concerned, the feeling[s] will pass and proceed to the strengthened and secure awareness of our own German virtue without any resentment; then we [will] have nothing to fear. Such an awareness depends upon political unity which one day must again be achieved and there are many paths to this end, even though things appear gloomy.

Die Generation zu welcher wir gehören, wird Mißtrauen und Abneigung gegen die Franzosen unauslöslich eingepägt bleiben, obwohl wir freilich vieles milder sehen,

also wir 1813-15 taten. Das Gefühl möchte aber meinethalben ganz übergehen in das gestärkte und sichere Bewußtsein unserer eigenen deutschen Kraft, ohne alle Feindseligkeit; dann hätten wir nichts zu fürchten. Ein solches Bewußtsein hängt aber ab von politischer Einheit, die einmal wieder über Deutschland kommen muß und dazu kann es mehrere Wege geben, obgleich Dunkel über sie gebreitet ist.

p. 189: Women know nothing of social conditions—altogether they are only connected to the State, Church, and the public, etc. by means of their husbands. They live in a literally natural state.

De Frauen wissen nichts von Verhältnissen der Gemeinschaft—Nur durch ihren Mann hängen sie mit Staat, Kirche, Publikum etc. zusammen. Sie leben im eigentlichen Naturstande.

Chapter Nine

p. 297: The mother is no parent of that which is called her child, but only nurse of the new-planted seed that grows. The parent is he who mounts. A stranger she preserves a strangers seed, if no god interfere....And of this truth, that father without mother may beget, we have present, as proof, the daughter of Olympian Zeus: one never nursed in the dark cradle of the womb

οὐκ ἔστι μήτηρ κεκλημένου τέκνου
τοκεὺς τροφὸς δὲ κύματος νεοσπόρου.
τίκτει δ' ὁ θρώσκων, δ' ἄπερ ξένω ξένη
ἔσωσεν ἔρνος, οἷσι μὴ βλάβῃ θεος.
τεκμήριον δὲ τοῦδ' εἰ σοὶ δείξω λόγου.
πατήρ μὲν ἄν γένοιτ' ἄνευ μητρος πέλας
μάρτυς πάρεστι παῖς Ὀλυμπίου Διός,
οὐδ' ἐν σκότοισι νηδύος τεθραμμένη.